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U.S. Department of Justice
Law Enforcement Assistance Administration
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

Reports of the National Juvenile Justice Assessment Centers

Jurisdiction and the Elusive Status Offender:

A Comparison of Involvement in Delinquent Behavior and Status Offenses

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National Institute for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

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Jurisdiction and the Elusive Status Offender:

A Comparison of Involvement in Delinquent Behavior and Status Offenses

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June 1980

best copy available

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402

S/N 027-000-00980-8

This report was prepared by the National Center for the Assessment of Delinquent Behavior and Its Prevention of the Center for Law and Justice, University of Washington, under Grant Number 77NI-99-0017 from the National Institute for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, U. S. Department of Justice. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U. S. Department of Justice.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

One of the most interesting and important policy issues in juvenile justice is whether the juvenile court should maintain, restrict, or abandon jurisdiction over status offenses. In addition to the widespread diversion and deinstitutionalization of status offenders, a few states have taken the next logical step and have changed their juvenile codes in order to limit the jurisdiction of the juvenile court over noncriminal misbehavior. These changes are not without their critics and, in fact, the issue has forced choosing of sides, each with influential groups defending or attacking the appropriateness of jurisdiction. Unfortunately, the arguments on both sides of the issue have been based on political, ideological, and emotional considerations, rather than on empirical evidence.

The respective positions are typically based on assumed differences or similarities in the "behavior" and "needs" of delinquents and status offenders. Those who defend the court's role suggest that status offenders have special needs and engage in behavior that is predictive of a delinquent career. Those who criticize jurisdiction suggest these youths' behavior is not significantly different, nor predictive of more serious delinquent involvement.

What little research has been done shows that the needs of status offenders and delinquents are not that different.

The more important focus, behavior, is less clear: The research suffers because comparisons are made between the occupants of the legal status "delinquent" and that of status "offender", which means their behavior is not measured directly. This paper focuses on the question whether the behavior is different or not by comparing "self-reported" involvement in delinquent behavior and status offenses.

A series of correlational and regression analyses of a number of studies of self-reported delinquency suggest that there is not a behaviorally unique status offender, nor delinquent for that matter, other than as the occupant of that unique legal status. Rather, juvenile offenders are typically versatile in their illegal behavior, and if a meaningful distinction is to be made, it is not on the basis of operational legal criteria (e.g., adjudication) but on the basis of behavioral criteria which do not necessarily correspond to the legal designations. That is, there are not delinquency or status offense specialists, but there are important differences in the intensity (or seriousness) of illegal involvement.

In short, there are petty offenders and serious offenders, and both engage both in status offenses and delinquent behavior. But the latter do so more frequently and commit more serious property and violent crimes. The policy implications are many; among them is the conclusion that jurisdiction should be restricted or, perhaps, abandoned, but not over status offenses (or status offenders) only but also over less serious delinquent behaviors (or delinquents). This can be accomplished legislatively through the jurisdictional abandonment of status offenses and operationally through administrative procedures which provide for the differential processing of petty and serious juvenile criminals.

I. THE POLICY ISSUE

The status offender is the illegitimate grandchild of the nineteenth century "child savers" (Platt, 1969) who were responsible for legislating the first juvenile court statute in Illinois in 1899. The original statute had only two basic categories of jurisdiction--delinquency and dependency--but the early *parens patriae* philosophy of the juvenile court provided the ideological foundation for the creation of the status offender. Consequently, the status offender has occupied an ambiguous position between the two original categories of jurisdiction: In some states "noncriminal juvenile misbehavior" (Gough, 1977) is subsumed under delinquency sections of statutes, in others it is included within dependency sections, while in some the status offender is defined in a completely separate section (Hutzler and Sestak, 1977). In short, the true identity of the status offender remains elusive and a chronic source of tension within the juvenile justice system.

The status offender is a historical byproduct of the two ostensibly compatible but, in practice, conflicting paramount goals of contemporary juvenile justice philosophy. Each of these goals was reflected directly in the legislative intent of the original Illinois statute and each buttressed a particular ideology of juvenile justice. The juvenile court was mandated to control juvenile delinquents and to prevent predelinquents from becoming delinquents. The first goal reflects a legalistic commitment to the control of juvenile criminal behavior, while the second reflects a social casework commitment to the welfare of those children who, because of dependency or neglect, have needs which if left unattended might lead to more serious behavior problems, including juvenile delinquency. Since the status offender is not clearly a delinquent or dependent child, but rather has an ambiguous legal identity, the juvenile justice system has been and is still faced with a major organizational dilemma: What is the proper relationship between the juvenile court and the status offender?

Historically, the organizational response has been to handle the status offender as an incipient delinquent who has special needs and, accordingly, requires rehabilitation both to satisfy material and emotional needs and to curtail future delinquent behavior. However, until very recently, status offenders have not been treated much differently than delinquents, whether at the point of police contact, adjudication, or disposition. This organizational defect has been the focus of constitutionalist and child advocacy criticism, but with little effect until the past decade.

Jurisdiction Over Status Offenders and Status Offenses

A new juvenile justice philosophy emerged during the sixties, which Platt (1970) has called the "delinquency control movement," and it has had an impact at least equal to that of the juvenile justice reforms of the "child savers" at the turn of the century. This philosophy was authoritatively legitimated by a historically unique conjunction of federal-level judicial, executive, and legislative actions. The decisions of the Supreme Court, particularly Gault in 1967; the recommendations of the juvenile justice task force of the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice in 1967, particularly concerning the deinstitutionalization and diversion of status offenders; and the passage of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act in 1974, with its emphases on deinstitutionalization, diversion, prevention, and youth advocacy, all mandated a resolution of the uncertainty surrounding the status offender. The message was and is clear--status offenders are not to be treated in the same way as delinquents. Unfortunately, an even more fundamental juvenile justice policy issue has not been resolved directly, but only by implication or extension: Should the juvenile court have jurisdiction over status offenses?

The distinction between status offender and status offense is an important one. Status offenders are juveniles to whom has been attributed that legal status, while status offenses are behaviors for which a juvenile may or may not receive the attribution as a status offender. These behaviors include truancy, runaway, incorrigibility, and curfew violation (offenses which only juveniles can commit) and smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, and sexual intimacy (acts which are legal for adults but illegal for juveniles). Youngsters may commit status offenses and never be identified as a status offender, simply because they may not come to the attention of authorities and, therefore, not be handled by the police or adjudicated by the court as a status offender. Others may be designated as status offenders who enter the juvenile justice system for delinquency--for a variety of legal, rehabilitative, and humanitarian reasons, informal and formal plea negotiation may lead to a change of legal status. Otherwise put, the status offender is created by his/her legal processing within the juvenile justice system. In short, status offenders personify a legal status and status offenses are behaviors.

What this distinction suggests is that the major juvenile justice reforms of the late sixties and the seventies have been directed primarily at "offenders," or at youths after they have engaged in delinquent behavior or status offenses and either entered the juvenile justice system or been diverted to surrogate youth service agencies. Again, the issue of whether the juvenile court should have jurisdiction over status offenses is basically unresolved, although there is certainly precedent in the manner in which status offenders are now handled. Until very recently most states have supported juvenile court jurisdiction over status offenses. A small number of states (e.g., Maine, Washington, Utah, California) have passed juvenile justice legislation which restricts dramatically the jurisdiction of the juvenile court, and in Maine there is jurisdictional abandonment of status offenses--if a juvenile does not commit an offense which would be a crime for an adult, the juvenile court does not have jurisdiction.

The justification for jurisdiction is drawn, as one might expect, from both of the major components of juvenile justice philosophy--status offenses are predelinquent behaviors which, if not prevented or controlled, will escalate into more serious delinquent behaviors, and/or status offenders have special needs which also demand attention, both for humanitarian and preventive purposes. The status offender, this argument holds, is simply a future delinquent who needs the rehabilitative services of the court to discourage the pursuit of a delinquent career. Otherwise put, the status offender is a delinquent in the bud who needs to be nipped.

More cynical defenders of jurisdiction suggest that the actual behavior of those youngsters "labeled" status offenders is not much different than that of adjudicated delinquents and that the attribution of the different legal statuses reflects the age, race, sex, and class biases of system agents. That is, today's status offender would also be today's delinquent but for the label!

Those who want to restrict or even abandon jurisdiction over status offenses tend to portray a status offender who "specializes" in relatively harmless, nonserious, victimless noncriminal behavior, and who has needs that are different from those of a bona fide juvenile delinquent. In short, the behavior and needs of status offenders are "different" and, therefore, they should be treated differently than and separately from juvenile delinquents. This is, of course, a logical extension of the historical commitment of the juvenile court to "individualized treatment." Besides, if treated in the same way as delinquents, there is the possibility of a self-fulfilling prophecy being set in motion--association with delinquents may lead to the contamination of status offenders, and some juveniles may be mislabeled, with the unanticipated negative consequence that their noncriminal misbehavior may become criminal behavior.[1]

The Current Debate and Trend

Since the first juvenile court act in 1899 a variety of critics has argued on the bases of differential behavior and need against a "socialized court" that claims jurisdiction over both criminal and noncriminal behavior. These collective and accumulating criticisms are now bringing juvenile justice full circle--the trend seems to be toward separate but unequal intervention and services, in the form of a "criminal tribunal" for juveniles who engage in criminal (viz. serious, harmful, dangerous) behavior and "community services" for youths who engage in noncriminal (viz. nonserious, relatively harmless, victimless) behavior and who may have special needs.

Even though imputed differences in behavior or need are among the most important reasons for restricting or abandoning jurisdiction over status offenses, there are, of course, a number of directly or indirectly related reasons. For examples:

1) The juvenile court is not, in fact, a rehabilitative agency and, therefore, does not control juvenile crime or prevent status offenders from becoming delinquents. In short, the court is ineffective in changing the behavior of youthful offenders, meeting their needs, or both.

2) The juvenile court unnecessarily criminalizes noncriminal misbehavior in its handling of status offenders.

3) The operations of the court may label or stigmatize youths who are involved in criminal behavior, as well as status offenders, with the possible effect that the careers of both, but particularly of the latter, may be adversely affected and escalate.

4) Status offenses are part of the "transitional deviance" in which most youths engage as part of normal socialization and maturation; that is, this kind of behavior should probably be discouraged but also tolerated because it is not a sign of worse things to come. In short, involvement in status offenses does not predict involvement in serious delinquent behavior.

5) Status offenses do not threaten the public safety, social order, or even necessarily the welfare of the child.

6) Jurisdiction is sometimes abused as the legal status of status offender becomes currency in a plea bargain--a crime

is reduced to a status offense in exchange for a guilty plea.

7) The availability of a less serious offender category may lead to unjust discretionary decisions based on sex, race, class, age, and other "extralegal" criteria.

8) The juvenile justice system is overburdened, primarily with status offenders, and therefore, its ability to deal with both criminal and noncriminal youths is impaired; it would be a more effective institution if it had responsibility for only one or the other.

9) Historically, the juvenile court has processed and handled delinquents and status offenders in similar fashion, which is not only unjust--especially if one assumes that they differ in typical behaviors and needs--but also hold the potential for behavioral contamination, negative identification by association, and so on.

10) Status offense jurisdiction has been attacked on a number of legal grounds--void for vagueness, violation of equal protection, denial of right to treatment, and unjust punishment of a condition.

11) The needs of neither the child nor society are being met by the services provided, nor do they promise to be met with the current structure of statutes and the juvenile justice system.

These and other criticisms were legitimated and became part and parcel of the emergent juvenile justice philosophy of the late sixties and early seventies. For years the proponents of a broad jurisdictional foundation for the juvenile court were secure in their rhetoric of rehabilitation but the mounting criticisms from all sides have forced the issue and people are formally and publicly "taking sides." For example, the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice (1967), the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (1975), the Institute of Judicial Administration and American Bar Association Joint Commission on Juvenile Justice Standards (1977), a number of states (e.g., Wisconsin, Washington, Maine), and a number of individuals including Ketchum (1977) and Abadinsky (1976) have come out in support of removal of jurisdiction, while many others defend jursidiction (Arthur, 1977a, 1977b; Martin and Snyder, 1976) or take a compromise position as the President's National Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (1978) which cannot seem to decide exactly what it supports--it recently reversed its support for removal and now favors the maintenance of qualified jurisdiction over status offenders. Regardless of sides, it is clear that this is an extremely important and volatile policy issue: The National Task Force on Juvenile Justice Standards and Goals (1977:1,4) concluded that "By far the most controversial idea with regard to status offenders today is whether or not the jurisdictional basis should exist at all"--it is "one of the most difficult (issues) in the entire field of juvenile justice."

It is also clear that both supporters and detractors are often ignoring experience and research in the formulation of their positions, and are proceeding sometimes arrogantly and brashly into the muddle of juvenile justice reform. But this is not unusual, for as Milton Rector (1975), the President of the National Council on Crime and Delinquency has noted, "In dealing with the problem of crime and delinquency our political leaders seem determined to avoid learning from either research or experience." Most of the arguments for and against jurisdiction over status offenses, even though some of them are correct on ideological, political, or philosophical grounds, are ineffectual (e.g., the constitutionalist attacks on statutory vagueness have not held up in case law) or rendered impotent by inadequate research data. For example, the issue which seems most crucial and which informs most others--what kind of behavior is the proper jurisdiction of the juvenile court--has been left virtually untouched by both researchers and policy makers.

And it is absolutely clear that recent reforms like diversion, deinstitutionalization, and removal of jurisdiction--all aimed at status offenders--are based on only the assumption that status offenders (viz. the occupants of that legal status) are, in terms of behavior and need, different from delinquents and, therefore, deserve and require different care. For example, from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency

Prevention "Program Announcement: Deinstitutionalization of Status Offenders" (1975), the first rationale of the program is that "status offenders constitute a group of youths different from juvenile delinquents, who become involved with the juvenile justice system because of behavior which would not be criminal for an adult" (emphases added).

If one favors jurisdictional abandonment of status offenses, the issue of differential "need" becomes moot--the court's jurisdiction is restricted to considerations of criminal behavior only. Therefore, different behavior suggests different jurisdiction. If one favors status offense jurisdiction, both behavior and needs are ostensibly important differentiating and dispositional criteria. Therefore, different behavior and needs suggest differential treatment. But even here, behavior is the most important differentiating criterion, especially when one takes into account the evidence that the service needs of delinquents and status offenders are not that different (Rector, 1975; Tate, et al., 1978; Smith, et al., 1978). For example, after examining the deinstitutionalization of status offenders in ten states, Tate, et al. (1978: vii) have concluded that "There are virtually no status offender-specific needs. Rather there are youth needs...The status offender population overlaps with juvenile delinquents, dependent and neglected children, as well as emotionally disturbed children...The spectrum of service needs for each of these groups is very similar."

Studies of Official Delinquents and Status Offenders

Since the imputed difference in "needs" is apparently neither empirically nor conceptually an important criterion in the argument over jurisdiction, it seems that both the arguments for and against jurisdiction over status offenses must rest upon an empirical assessment of the behavior of youngsters who engage in delinquent behavior and status offenses. A rigorous analysis of this sort has not been done. Rather, what few studies are available examine "official" delinquents and status offenders, which means that they are not analyzing measures of behavior per se but records of contact or intervention for some subset of perhaps unrepresentative illegal behaviors to which there may be a selective official reaction. The conclusions of these kinds of studies must, therefore, be restricted to observations about the differential attribution of the legal statuses of delinquent and status offender to an unspecified universe of behavior. One cannot really conclude much about the behavior of official delinquents or status offenders, unless one is willing to assume that each type of offender engages in only that type of behavior and that the attribution of legal status matches the behavior. Empirically, we know that neither of these assumptions is correct and that many analysts of official data are even unwilling to make them. Additionally, the findings of studies which do utilize official data are somewhat contradictory, especially when comparisons are made between official delinquents and status offenders to determine whether they are "different." The work of Thomas (1976), which is probably the best available which utilizes official data, and of Clarke (1975), are good examples of these kinds of studies. The former concludes that official delinquents and status offenders are _not_ different in their juvenile _court_ experiences, while the latter suggests that they _are_ different in their experience with the _police_.

Using juvenile court data in a longitudinal, comparative analysis of the "careers" of official offenders (both delinquents and status offenders), Thomas (1976) assesses the two major arguments of advocates of removal of jurisdiction over status offenders. These arguments are: _First_, that status offenders are not harmful or dangerous to society because they have not been, are not, and will not become involved in more serious criminal offenses. That is, they are a behaviorally homogeneous group of petty offenders whose behavior will not escalate into a career of serious crime. _Second_, any move toward more serious illegal involvement is, ironically, not a natural behavioral career development but a byproduct of official reaction, processing, and labeling by the juvenile justice system.

By examining the offense histories of youngsters who appeared before the juvenile court over a five year period and comparing the careers of delinquent and status offenders, Thomas (1976) concluded that the data do not support the assumptions (or arguments) of the advocates of jurisdictional abandonment. First, status offenders are not a distinct group of juvenile offenders. They appeared in court for delinquency before and after their referrals as status offenders. That is, official status offenders generally do not constitute a homogeneous group, even in terms of the legal status attributed to them, much less in terms of their behavior (which, of course, their data cannot illuminate).[2] Second, there are apparently no "labeling effects" from being processed by the juvenile court. That is, there does not seem to be an association between organizational processing and subsequent involvement in more serious criminal behavior. If there is a pattern of career development, it is independent of the labeling effects of the juvenile justice system.

A reanalysis of the Wolfgang, Figlio, and Sellin (1972) cohort data from Philadelphia produces findings which portray a somewhat different official status offender. Clarke (1976) examined the careers of all boys in the cohort who had police contact records for delinquent and status offenses (N=3,475). Among those subjects whose first official record was for a status offense, there was less chance of recidivating than among first time delinquent offenders. Those boys whose first record was for a status offense were less frequent and less serious offenders until age 18 than those whose first offense of record was a crime. Apparently, first time status offenders are less dangerous than first time delinquents.

Clarke (1976) also reports that there is no evidence of "escalation"--subjects with records for crime did not begin with records for status offenses. The probability of committing a crime did not depend on past involvement in status offenses, nor even on the total number of recorded offenses. As the Wolfgang, Figlio, and Sellin (1972) analyses discovered, an extant offense of record is more likely related to the immediately prior offense than to others taken singly or additively over the duration of an official offense history. In short, there is no predictable escalation from status offenses to crime. Rather, it seems that some youngsters begin their offender careers as status offenders and others as delinquents, and they generally remain as one or the other. And it seems that most of the serious crime (e.g., UCR index offenses) is committed by a small group of offenders who began their official careers as delinquents. Of course, the findings imply that control efforts might be directed most effectively at youngsters whose first police record is for delinquency rather than for a status offense.[3]

One thing seems clear from these two studies: Whether court records (Thomas, 1976) or police records (Clarke, 1975) are used as the measure of attribution as delinquent or status offender, the common-sense notion that less serious illegal involvement (predelinquency) leads to more serious illegal involvement (delinquency) is questionable. Career escalation from status offender to delinquent does not seem to be predictable. Whether or not there is a "difference" between official delinquents and status offenders is not clear. According to juvenile court records (Thomas, 1976), they seem not to be that different, with neither group "specializing" in one kind of referral to court. But the police records (Clarke, 1975) suggest that they are different, with both groups beginning with a particular legal attribution and typically keeping it throughout their juvenile offender careers.

This disagreement may simply reflect the two different measures, but there is a more likely source of the discrepancy--neither of the studies can address directly the question of whether or not there is escalation in the seriousness of, or even a difference in, the *behavior per se*. They can only assess changes in legal status and make the usual assumptions about correspondence between legal status and behavior. The authors themselves are aware of the problems with official data: For example, Thomas (1976:444), in lamenting these types of limitations with official data, warns that "Some aspects of these biases can be removed by carefully controlled analyses. Others, unfortunately, cannot and must be taken as *inherent limitations* on research which employs official records as an exclusive source of data, limitations which must be kept in mind in any interpretation of analyses similar to that reported here" (emphasis added).

The type of study that is necessary to answer with confidence these kinds of questions has not been done. To determine whether official delinquents and status offenders are behaviorally different and whether there is escalation in career development, an ideal study would require a longitudinal design, a reverse record check, self-reports of behaviors, and analytic comparisons of the types, frequency, seriousness, and patterns of illegal behavior (as well as other variables of interest, such as sociodemographic characteristics) of official delinquents and status offenders.

Again, unfortunately, the ideal study has not been done, but the current study attempts to overcome the problems inherent in research which uses official measures, and it comes as close to the ideal study as possible through secondary analyses of available data. Using six self-reported delinquency data sets[4]--Tri-Cities (Short and Nye), Provo (Empey and Erickson), San Diego (Elliott and Voss), National (Gold), Lafayette (Weis), and Somerville (Hindelang)--this study attempts to answer the same kinds of questions posed by Thomas (1976), but, in this case, the questions focus on the differences between youngsters who report that they engage in delinquent behavior, status offenses, or both, regardless of the legal consequences of that behavior. This will get as close to the actual behavior as possible with current social scientific measurement techniques, and allow the kinds of analyses necessary to understand better the involvement of juveniles in both delinquent behavior and status offenses and, therefore, the issue of jurisdiction.

There are three major questions and an ancillary question which will be the focuses of analysis.

1) Are juveniles who engage in delinquent behavior and those who engage in status offenses behaviorally different groups? Or, do youngsters who commit status offenses (or delinquent acts) tend to "specialize" in one kind of offense or are they "versatile" in their illegal behavior? Otherwise put, is there concurrent involvement in delinquent behavior and status offenses?

The second and third questions are variants of a more general question: Is there "escalation" in the seriousness of careers of status offenders?

2) Among youngsters who engage in status offenses, did they engage in delinquent behavior?

3) Among youngsters who engage in status offenses, will they engage in delinquent behavior? Or, does involvement in status offenses precede and, therefore, predict involvement in delinquent behavior?

The final question relates to the official reaction to illegal behavior.

4) Are the reactions of the police and the juvenile court different for status offenses and delinquent behavior? Or, which kind of behavior is most likely to lead to official attention and intervention?[5]

The answers to these questions inform the issue of jurisdiction over status offenses.

Self-Reports of Illegal Behavior

Thorough examination of the questions raised above requires the utilization of the most appropriate data sources. As suggested, the few studies which have addressed these issues have analyzed data collected only from official sources. Official data measure the number of individuals reported, apprehended, or processed by the criminal justice system, but may be rather poor measures of actual involvement in illegal behavior.

The processes through which the juvenile justice system operates necessarily weed out individuals at each step. Obviously, not all individuals who are involved in delinquent or status offenses come into contact with the police or are adjudicated. To the extent that the youth population represented in official records differs from that of all adolescents engaged in the offenses in question, then official records are misleading.

Although differences in the frequency and seriousness of offenses do influence an individual's progress through the system, there is some indication that other characteristics are also involved. For instance, there tends to be a higher percentage of youths from broken homes among those incarcerated, because courts traditionally have been more willing to release a child to parents if the family is intact (Wilkinson, 1974). Social class and racial differences may also be reflected in official records due to differential law enforcement (Erickson, 1972). There may also be a sex bias introduced by the juvenile justice system's tendency to treat girls differently than boys (Chesney-Lind, 1977). While girls seem to be less likely to be picked up by the police than boys, once they enter the system they may be treated more severely.

An alternative measure of involvement in illegal behavior--the one which is favored by contemporary researchers on the etiology of delinquent behavior--is the self-report technique. Data are collected by asking individuals, assured typically of the anonymity or the confidentiality of their responses, to report the number of times they have engaged in specific offenses during a given period of time. Self-report studies produce a quite different picture of delinquent and status offenses than do official records. Involvement in these offenses is shown to be much more widespread in the youth population than one would assume on the basis of official records. This is especially true of less serious delinquent behavior and of status offenses. Self-report data also show that some individuals frequently commit these offenses but do not come into contact with the juvenile justice system.

The degree to which the discrepancy between official and self-report data may affect interpretations is indicated in Tables 1 and 2. The data in Table 1 come from the Somerville data set. These data were collected from high school students in a Boston suburb in 1971. The first column indicates the individual's self-reported involvement (one or more times) in each offense. The next two columns are self-reports of police contacts and of arrests for each of the offenses. Percentages reporting having done each act range from over 75% for the status offenses to only 2% for heroin use. The next two columns show the degree of error possible when using measures of official reaction to reflect the actual extent of illegal behavior in the population.

Although 77.5% of the respondents report having been drunk at some time during the past year, and almost 19% were contacted by the police, only 3.1% of the total sample report having actually been arrested for the offense. Other offenses also demonstrate the dramatic loss of cases between participation in the offense and arrest. Over half of the sample admits to smoking marijuana, but less than 1% report arrests for the offense. In fact, the arrest rate in the sample is uniformly low for all offenses. The only delinquent offenses for which arrests exceeded one percent of the sample were:

TABLE 1

EXTENT OF INVOLVEMENT[1] IN STATUS AND DELINQUENT OFFENSES BY TYPE OF SELF-REPORT MEASURE

SOMERVILLE DATA SET (N=1119)

Status Offenses	Self-Reported Involvement	Self-Reported Police Contacts	Self-Reported Arrests
Cut School	77.8(867)	--	--
Smoke	79.7(869)	--	--
Drunk	77.5(853)	18.7(191)	3.1(33)
Delinquent Offenses			
Theft < $2	46.0(504)	3.4(36)	0.8(9)
Theft $2-50	17.0(188)	2.2(23)	0.4(4)
Theft > $50	11.4(126)	2.1(22)	1.0(11)
Property Damage < $10	25.8(283)	4.6(48)	0.7(7)
Property Damage > $10	16.4(181)	3.9(41)	0.9(10)
Fist Fight	42.5(467)	7.9(83)	1.4(15)
Carry Weapon	18.3(202)	1.6(17)	0.7(7)
Fight With Weapon	9.2(101)	2.3(24)	0.5(5)
Theft With Force	3.4(38)	0.1(1)	0.1(1)
Break and Enter	14.6(161)	2.7(29)	1.1(12)
Drive Drunk	17.2(193)	3.1(32)	0.8(9)
Steal Car	12.0(132)	2.4(25)	1.2(13)
Use Pills	32.4(354)	2.0(21)	0.6(6)
Use Pot	56.0(614)	5.9(61)	0.9(10)
Use Glue	9.2(101)	0.6(6)	0.1(1)
Use LSD	13.6(149)	0.8(8)	0.3(3)
Use Heroin	2.0(22)	0.0(0)	0.1(1)
Sell Drugs	16.5(181)	1.2(13)	0.4(4)

---

1. Percent involved one or more times, Ns in parentheses.

theft of items over $50, fist-fighting, breaking and entering, and taking a car. These data indicate a high prevalence of status offenses and less serious delinquent behavior. Involvement in more serious offenses is less common, but still is greater than indicated by official records.

The data in Table 2 are more difficult to interpret. The data were collected as a part of the Provo Experiment in delinquency rehabilitation in 1959. The sample was composed of three distinct subsamples: 100 boys drawn randomly from the county's population; 170 boys placed on probation by the juvenile court; and 85 boys randomly selected from the statewide population of incarcerated delinquents. Of course, this sample has many more official delinquents than a sample of the general youth population. Despite this fact, the data show that many delinquent acts and status offenses go undetected by officials.

The Provo data again show that the prevalence of delinquent and status offenses varies widely by offense, and relatively few youngsters come into contact with the police for their offenses. As expected, given the nature of the sample, there are higher percentages of official intervention than in the Somerville sample, but there are still many delinquent and status offenses which go undetected. For example, over 90% of the sample reported having stolen things worth less than $2, yet only 13% were actually brought to court for the offense. Over 80% of the boys reported having drunk alcohol,

TABLE 2

EXTENT OF INVOLVEMENT[1] IN STATUS AND DELINQUENT OFFENSES BY TYPE OF MEASURE

PROVO DATA SET (N=391)

Status Offenses	Self-Reported Involvement	Self-Reported Arrests	Court Appearances[2]
Skip School	69.8(210)[3]	14.5(48)	14.4(41)
Defy Parents	56.3(200)	--	2.5(7)
Defy Others In Authority	63.8(192)	50.6(168)[4]	6.7(19)
Smoking	50.3(151)	5.4(18)	2.1(6)
Run Away	41.1(124)	23.8(79)	16.9(48)
Buy Alcohol	35.4(107)	--	.7(2)
Drink Alcohol	81.8(247)	11.4(38)[5]	9.5(27)
Sex With Female	58.6(116)	2.7(9)[6]	3.6(10)
Sex With Male	7.0(14)	--	--
Delinquent Offenses			
Break and Enter	66.6(199)	39.5(131)	35.6(101)
Theft < $2	91.4(275)	--	13.0(37)
Theft $2-50	68.2(206)	39.2(130)[7]	31.0(88)
Theft > $50	28.9(87)	15.4(51)	15.5(44)
Steal Car	34.6(104)	21.1(70)	18.0(51)
Robbery	4.6(14)	2.4(8)	--
Vandalism	73.7(221)	16.6(55)	13.0(37)
Drive Without License	84.6(253)	33.4(111)[8]	22.5(64)[9]
Use Narcotics	5.0(15)	0.0	--
Fist Fight	72.4(218)	12.1(37)	.6(17)
Gambling	81.1(241)	1.5(5)	0.0

1. Percent involved one or more times, Ns in parentheses.
2. N=284 (107 missing cases for each court appearance item).
3. 0 = 0 to 5 times; 1 = 6 or more times.
4. Defy authority, other than parents.
5. Alcohol: buy, sell, drink, possession.
6. Sexual delinquency.
7. Theft.
8. Traffic violations.
9. Traffic violations: 23.2(66).

but only 11.4% reported arrests and 9.5% had been in court for alcohol use. So, whether looking at delinquent or status offenses, even a sample with an overrepresentation of official delinquents reports much more illegal behavior than is known to the police.

The self-report method is not without its problems and critics (Farrington, 1974; Nettler, 1974; Reiss, 1975), but the data generated by this technique are more valid and reliable as measures of illegal behavior than official records and meet the strictest standards of social scientific inquiry (Hindelang, Hirschi, and Weis, 1978; Clark and Tifft, 1966; Kulik, Stein, and Sarbin, 1968; Erickson and Empey, 1963; Gold, 1970). It is the apparently best way to measure illegal behavior that is available to criminological researchers. The strongest competitor is the victimization survey, in which the subject reports whether or not he has been victimized (Hindelang, Gottfredson, and Garofalo, 1978). Of course, victim surveys are inadequate as measures of victimless illegal behavior, including status offenses, thereby ruling out their use in studies of this kind of behavior.

This study includes some data sets which use both self-report and official data. By utilizing both sources of data in the analyses, the benefits of each should be retained and the problems minimized. This will be particularly important when examining the official reaction to delinquent behavior and status offenses.

II. CONCURRENT INVOLVEMENT IN DELINQUENT AND STATUS OFFENSES

Having made the argument that self-report data can provide us with information not captured in official statistics, we now turn our attention to the first of the three major questions addressed in this report--the question of concurrent involvement. Are youngsters engaged in status offenses also concurrently involved in more serious delinquent offenses? Are youths who engage in status offenses a specialized (homogeneous) or versatile (heterogeneous) behavioral group? Do youngsters specialize in status offenses only or do they also commit more serious delinquent offenses? Can juveniles who commit status offenses be characterized as a group distinct from those who engage in more serious delinquent behavior? Those who argue for removing court jurisdiction over status offenders assert that adolescents involved in status offenses are not those involved in delinquent behavior, while their opponents maintain that adolescents who commit status offenses are not very different from adolescents involved in delinquent acts. Or, that if they are different, it is simply a consequence of differential processing--or labeling--by a juvenile justice system which allows extralegal or social factors to influence decisions.

The analysis will concentrate on two cross-sectional self-report data sets, wherein data were collected at a single point in time and, therefore, can provide information on the respondent's recent behavior but not on changes in behavior over time. The two data sets used in this analysis are the Somerville and Lafayette data sets. The Lafayette study like the Somerville study involved collection of self-reported data through anonymous questionnaires administered, in this case, to all ninth and twelfth graders in two suburban California schools. The questionnaire asked respondents how many times in the past three years they had committed each of 34 delinquent and status offenses. The following analysis will employ a number of delinquent behavior and status offense scales which are comparable across the two data sets. Although some information may be lost by not analyzing each item individually, the overall results are more easily understood when scales are used. For both data sets, the following groups of offenses were utilized in creating the various scales:[6]

Delinquency Scales

1) Delinquency: fist fight; weapon fight; robbery; low property damage; high property damage; smoking marijuana; low theft; medium theft; high theft; break and enter; car theft (11 items).

2) Serious Delinquency: weapon fight; robbery; low property damage; high property damage; medium theft; high theft; break and enter; car theft (8 items).

3) Less Serious Delinquency: fist fight; smoking marijuana; low theft (3 items).

Status Offense Scales

1) Status Offenses (Prevalence) I: cut school; getting drunk (2 items).

2) Status Offenses (Prevalance) II: cut school; getting drunk; smoking (3 items) [SOMERVILLE only].

3) Status Offenses (Frequency) III: curfew; cut class; cut school; out all night; drinking; getting drunk (6 items) [LAFAYETTE only].

Zero-Order Correlations

The correlations[7] between the different scales are shown in Table 3. All of the delinquency and status offense scales are significantly intercorrelated (p<.001). While these correlations indicate a significant amount of overlap between status offenses and delinquent behavior, their different magnitudes should be taken into account. The strongest correlations are between the three different delinquency scales, followed closely by the correlations between the status offense scales. Of course, the correlations between the general delinquency scale and the other delinquency scales are inflated by the inclusion of some of the same items in the scales. For the same reason the correlations between status offense scales are also inflated and must be viewed with caution. However, they show some differences between those youngsters who engage in status offenses and those who engage in delinquent acts.

The importance of examining the "seriousness" of delinquent involvement is also demonstrated in these tables: Less

TABLE 3

CORRELATION MATRIX* OF DELINQUENT AND STATUS OFFENSE SCALES

SOMERVILLE DATA SET (N=1119)

	Serious Delinquency	Less Serious Delinquency	Status Offenses I	Status Offenses II
Delinquency	.95	.74	.21	.22
Serious Delinquency		.50	.12	.12
Less Serious Delinquency			.33	.38
Status Offenses I				.87

LAFAYETTE DATA SET (N=668)

	Serious Delinquency	Less Serious Delinquency	Status Offenses I	Status Offenses III
Delinquency	.90	.70	.34	.41
Serious Delinquency		.40	.18	.22
Less Serious Delinquency			.44	.53
Status Offenses I				.65

* All correlations (Pearson's r) significant at .001

serious delinquency is not as strongly correlated with serious delinquency as one would expect if delinquency were a unidimensional phenomenon. In fact, the Lafayette data show that both status offense scales are more strongly related to less serious delinquency than is serious delinquency (.44 and .53 vs. .40). And both data sets show much weaker relationships between the status offense scales and the serious delinquency scales (.12 and .12 for Somerville and .18 and .22 for Lafayette). This suggests that the amount of involvement in _serious_ delinquency by those reporting status offenses may be slight, while the involvement in less serious delinquency may be more pervasive and substantial. One may also infer that there may be only two constellations of juvenile illegal behavior: one consists of petty illegal behavior, including less serious delinquent and status offenses, and the other consists of more serious delinquent behavior. The magnitude of the relationships indicates that many adolescents involved in status offenses are _not_ concurrently involved in serious delinquency. Rather, if they commit delinquent acts, they are much more likely to be involved in less serious delinquency. This is not surprising since the items scored as less serious delinquency seem more similar in behavioral content and degree of harm to status offenses than to serious delinquency.

Even though the relationships between concurrent involvement in status offenses and delinquent behavior are significant, the magnitudes of the correlations indicate some differences in involvement patterns. Further investigation of the differential involvement requires the introduction of more variables into the analysis. If it can be shown that involvement in status offenses is more strongly related to some other factor, for example, the sex of the offender, than is involvement in delinquency, we may be able to draw some conclusions about possible differences between those youths involved in status offenses and those involved in delinquent behavior. The variables chosen to expand the analysis include sociodemographic characteristics which supposedly differentiate "status offenders" from "delinquents"--*age* (Clarke, 1975), *sex* (Chesney-Lind, 1977), and *socioeconomic status* (Gough, 1971)--as well as two measures of variables which are commonly employed in delinquency research and have been shown to be important correlates of delinquent behavior--*school performance* (Hirschi, 1969) and *peer influence* (Weis, *et al*., 1979). After presenting the zero-order correlations between these variables and the different delinquency and status offense scales, the analysis will introduce these variables as controls to examine the relationships in more detail.

Tables 4 and 5 show similar results for the Somerville and Lafayette data sets, respectively. The most consistent and strongest associations are produced by the measures of *delinquent peers*. The relationships are strong in both data sets, with the magnitudes seemingly inversely related to the seriousness of offense: The relationship of delinquent friends

TABLE 4

CORRELATION[1] MATRIX OF DELINQUENT AND STATUS OFFENSE SCALES WITH SELECTED INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

SOMERVILLE DATA SET (N=1,119)

	Sex[2]	Age	SES	GPA[3]	Delinquent Peers
Delinquency	.20*	.04	-.01	-.11*	.27*
Serious Delinquency	.18*	.03	-.01	-.10*	.19*
Less Serious Delinquency	.19*	.04	.01	-.11*	.38*
Status Offenses I	.10*	.10*	.05	-.10*	.41*
Status Offenses II	-.02	.07**	.02	-.19*	.43*

* = Significant at .001

** = Significant at .05

1. Pearson's r.
2. Boys = 1; Girls = 0.
3. Self-reports of "grades capable of."

TABLE 5

CORRELATION[1] MATRIX OF DELINQUENT AND STATUS OFFENSE SCALES WITH SELECTED INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

LAFAYETTE DATA SET (N=668)

	Sex[2]	Grade[3]	SES	GPA[4]	Delinquent Peers
Delinquency	.19*	-.05	-.05	-.36*	.30*
Serious Delinquency	.14*	.03	-.04	-.23*	.18*
Less Serious Delinquency	.19*	.16*	-.03	-.35*	.38*
Status Offenses I	.11	.45*	-.03	-.24*	.35*
Status Offenses III	.04	.54*	-.00	-.43*	.36*

* = Significant at .001

** = Significant at .05

1. Pearson's r.
2. Boys = 1; Girls = 0.
3. School grade, 9th or 12th.
4. Actual GPA, for the 12th grade only.

to the serious delinquency scale is much weaker in both data sets (.19 and .16), than its relationship to less serious delinquency (.38 in both tables). As expected, since the full delinquency scales are composed of the two subscales, it produces correlations which range in strength between the correlations for the serious and less serious scales. And, the correlations for both status offense scales with delinquent friends are approximately the same in the Lafayette data (.35 and .36), and are stronger in the Somerville data (.41 and .43).

Sex is strongly related to delinquency--boys are more likely than girls to report delinquent acts. In Somerville, sex is significantly related to all but the second status offense scale; this is probably due to the fact that this scale includes smoking cigarettes and more girls than boys report smoking. In Lafayette, a similar absence of a relation between sex and the third status offense scale is probably due to the fact that this scale includes curfew violation and cutting class and school, behaviors which are reported about equally for girls and boys.

The correlations with sex are stronger for delinquent behavior than for status offenses. Overall, the data suggest that girls are more likely to commit status offenses than delinquent offenses, and the former are the offenses for which having delinquent friends has the greatest effect. It may be the case that having peers who encourage or support them is enough to influence some adolescents, especially the girls, to participate in status offenses but is not enough to lead them into more serious delinquent behavior. Clearly some attention should be paid to the possibility of an interaction between sex and delinquent friends in the causation of delinquent and status offenses.

Age (measured by grade in school in the Lafayette data) again seems to be more important for involvement in status offenses than in delinquent behavior. In the Somerville data there is no association between age and any of the delinquency scales. The correlations with the status offense scales are both statistically significant, although the magnitudes are not impressive. The Lafayette data show significant relationships between age and the two status offense scales and the less serious delinquency scales. The age distribution of the Lafayette sample (ninth and twelfth grades only) is quite different than that of the Somerville sample (tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades), and the relative extremes of the Lafayette sample probably account for the strength of the relationship between age and the two status offense scales (.45 and .54). Although ninth graders may not have been heavily involved in status offenses during the three years prior to their questioning, by the time they are in the twelfth grade it seems likely that they have been involved in status offenses. This would explain why age is important in the second sample and less so in the first.

School performance, as measured by grade point average (GPA), is significantly related to all of the scales in both data sets. The difference in the magnitudes of the correlations between the two data sets may be partially explained by the different measures of GPA: The Somerville sample was asked what kind of grades they believed they were capable of making; for the Lafayette sample, school records were used to calculate actual GPA, although only for the twelfth graders. The Somerville data yield approximately the same correlations for all of the scales with GPA, except for the second status offense scale (the higher correlation for this scale may indicate an interaction between sex and GPA, since this is the scale which includes the most involvement by girls). The Lafayette data support this suspicion, since the second status offense scale also produces the strongest correlation, followed by the delinquency and less serious delinquency scales. And there may also be an interaction involved between having delinquent friends and GPA.

The final variable included in these tables, socioeconomic status (SES), produces no significant associations with any of the scales. This is consistent with self-report studies which generally show no or little relationship between SES and delinquency (Nye and Short, 1957; Erickson and Empey, 1963; Hirschi, 1969; Elliott and Voss, 1974). And official data, too, when examined at the individual rather than aggregate level, tend to support the conclusion of no relationship between delinquency and SES (Hindelang, Hirschi, and Weis, 1978; 1979).

Partial Correlations[8]

The associations between the three scales of delinquency and the two status offense scales generally remain significant despite the introduction of a number of control variables--sex, age, socioeconomic status, grade point average, and delinquent peers.[9] However, controlling for delinquent peers diminishes the original correlations more than any of the other independent variables. This attenuation is especially evident in the Somerville data set, where the correlation between serious delinquency and both of the status offense scales is nonsignificant when controlling for delinquent friends. In other words, when the effect of having delinquent friends is removed by the use of statistical controls, the relationship between status offenses and serious delinquency disappears. Apparently being involved in serious delinquency on the one hand, and in status offenses on the other, reflects differential relations with or responses to peer influence--in this case, peer support is probably more typical of the commission of the less serious (and more "social") status offenses. In the Lafayette data, these relationships remain significant when the controls are introduced, but the magnitudes of the relationships are diminished.

Additionally, the possibility of interactions between some of the independent variables was considered to see if the simple bivariate analysis might obscure more complex relationships. Controlling for each of the independent variables, the original relationships are not altered between the delinquency and status offense scales and the independent variables.

The results of the partial correlation analyses suggest that there are not important interaction effects. The relationships among the variables, for the most part, remain strong even when control variables are introduced, although there may be some interaction between sex and delinquent peers. Little difference was observed between the delinquent behavior and status offense scales that was not apparent in the zero-order relationships. This suggests that a multivariate analysis of these data would facilitate a better understanding of the relationships between the selected independent variables and delinquent and status offenses because one can assess the relative importance of a variable while controlling simultaneously for the effects of other variables.

Multivariate Analysis

The following analysis will utilize multiple regression techniques, which will allow us to compare the "relative effect" of each of the independent variables on the delinquency and status offense scales when simultaneously controlling for each of the other independent variables.[10] The independent variables used in the regression analysis include sex, delinquent peers, and GPA because of their demonstrated persistent effects. Because of its central role in etiological research on delinquency, SES will also be included. Some differences are to be expected between the data sets, due both to differences in the samples and the measures used for some of the variables.[11]

This multivariate analysis is not intended to provide a comprehensive explanation of involvement in either delinquency or status offenses, but does allow one to address the question of whether or not some of the variables thought to be important correlates or "causes" of delinquent behavior are also important for status offenses. That is, one would assume that if there were substantial differences in the behaviors, the correlates and causes would be different. Or if the behavior were similar, so too the correlates and causes.

The results of the multiple regression analysis are shown in Tables 6 and 7. The "standardized" regression coefficients are given in these tables because they are easier to compare with each other _within_ the same equation. That is, one can compare the relative contribution of each independent variable as a "cause" of a particular dependent variable--in this case, _one_ of the delinquency or status offense scales. Because of the way in which the coefficients are standardized, however, comparisons _between_ equations cannot be readily interpreted. That is, one cannot compare the relative contributions of "sex," for example, to serious delinquency, on the one hand, and to status offenses, on the other.

The first equation in each table, corresponding to the first row of coefficients in each, shows the relationship of

TABLE 6

DELINQUENT AND STATUS OFFENSE SCALES WITH SELECTED INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

SOMERVILLE DATA SET (N=1119)

(Standardized Regression Coefficients)

		Sex[1]	Delinquent Peers	GPA	SES	R^2
1.	Delinquency	.17*	.24*	-.08***	.00	.11
2.	Serious Delinquency	.16*	.16*	-.08***	-.01	.07
3.	Less Serious Delinquency	.14*	.35*	-.07**	.01	.17
4.	Status Offenses I	.05	.39*	-.07**	.05	.17
5.	Status Offenses II	-.08***	.43*	-.15*	.04	.21

* = Significant at .001
** = Significant at .01
*** = Significant at .05

1. Boys = 1; Girls = 0.

the independent variables with the delinquency scale. In the Somerville data (Table 6), delinquent peers is the variable with the greatest explanatory power, followed closely by sex. Although statistically significant, GPA is not as strong a predictor as the first two variables. As expected, SES is not significant. The R^2 indicates that this combination of variables accounts for eleven percent of the variance in the dependent variable. This means that there are other variables, not considered here, which would have to be entered into the analysis to explain better a youngster's involvement in those behaviors which constitute the general delinquency scale.

The independent variables in the Lafayette data (Table 7) produce a somewhat different picture, although the percent of explained variance is similar. The most important variable is GPA, followed by delinquent peers. Surprisingly, sex is not significant in these data. Again, this could be due to differences in the samples or GPA measures. (The more precise measure of GPA in the Lafayette data probably produces greater variation, thus allowing for stronger relationships.) Part of the relationship between sex and delinquency may be mediated through GPA, and if this is the case then the data with the more accurate measure of GPA should mediate more of the effect of sex. Again, as expected, SES produces no relationship.

Sex, peers, school performance, and SES, taken together, do not seem to be as important in an explanation of serious

TABLE 7

DELINQUENT AND STATUS OFFENSE SCALES WITH SELECTED INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

LAFAYETTE DATA SET (N=351)

(Standardized Regression Coefficients)

		Sex[1]	Delinquent Peers	GPA	SES	R^2
1.	Delinquency	.11	.18***	-.28*	-.03	.17
2.	Serious Delinquency	.10	.10	-.17***	-.03	.07
3.	Less Serious Delinquency	.10	.28*	-.23*	-.02	.21
4.	Status Offenses I	.03	.30*	-.13**	-.03	.14
5.	Status Offenses III	-.06	.25*	-.35*	.02	.24

* = Significant at .001
** = Significant at .01
*** = Significant at .05

1. Boys = 1; Girls = 0.

delinquency as of less serious delinquency and status offenses. The explained variance drops to seven percent for both the Somerville and Lafayette scales of serious delinquency. The standardized regression coefficients again show some differences between the two data sets. In the Somerville data the coefficients show equal effects of sex and delinquent friends. Once again, GPA makes a significant but somewhat weaker contribution, and SES is not significant. In the Lafayette data GPA is the only variable with a significant coefficient in the equation for serious delinquency. This suggests that in middle class communities, more so than in more typically working class communities, poor school performance is an important predictor of involvement in serious delinquency.

These independent variables seem to be much more appropriate as part of an explanation of less serious delinquent behavior--the percent of explained variance increases in both data sets to 17% in Somerville and 21% in Lafayette. Delinquent peers, once again, is the most important variable in the Somerville data, with a coefficient more than twice as large as the next most important variable, sex. The Lafayette data reinforce the importance of delinquent peers as a correlate of less serious delinquency--it is the best predictor followed closely by GPA, while sex and SES are not significant.

The relations of the same variables with the status offense scales are somewhat different. The first status offense scale, composed only of cutting school and getting drunk, is identical for both data sets. In the Somerville data, the effect of sex disappears, while in the Lafayette data it remains insignificant. These data suggest that, contrary to official data which suggest a sex difference in the handling and processing of male and female status offenders, sex is _not_ a significant predictor of involvement in status offenses. And in the Somerville data, sex even seems to be a better predictor of delinquent behavior. In short, sex does not differentiate delinquent and status offenses to the extent or in the manner suggested in the literature on juvenile justice system processing or in current juvenile justice policies and practices.

Having delinquent peers is overwhelmingly important, accounting for over half of the total explained variance, while GPA, although significant, is a distant second as a predictor. In the Lafayette data, having delinquent friends is also the most important variable. The much smaller coefficient for GPA is also significant, while sex and SES are not significant.

The _second_ status offense scale in the Somerville data adds only the variable "smoking cigarettes," but the set of independent variables being used here seems more appropriate to this status offense scale than to the first status offense scale or the delinquency scales. The amount of explained variance increases to 21%, and the coefficients are especially interesting. The delinquent peers variable, again, is clearly most important, followed by GPA. Sex is significant, but in the opposite direction--the addition of smoking cigarettes to the status offense scale shows that girls are more likely to participate in these status offenses when controlling for delinquent friends, GPA, and SES.

The second status offense scale (Status Offenses III) in the Lafayette data includes more offenses than the Somerville scale, but the results are similar. The relationship with sex again changes direction, although the coefficient is not significant. However, GPA is the most important variable for the second status offense scale. And although the effect of delinquent peers is diminished, it still adds an important amount to the total explained variance of 24%.

These data suggest that status offenses and less serious delinquent behavior share correlates and, perhaps, "causes." Delinquent peers and school performance seem to be especially important correlates of status offenses and less serious delinquency, and are less influential regarding involvement in serious delinquency. Sex, on the other hand, does not appear to be a good predictor of status offenses when other variables are taken into account. Apparently, this particular set of independent variables does a less adequate job in explaining serious delinquency than less serious delinquency or status offenses. Clearly, there are other "causes" of serious delinquency, again pointing to a difference between status offenses and less serious delinquency, on the one hand, and serious delinquency, on the other.

Item-By-Item Analysis of Status Offenses and Delinquent Behavior

So far, we have analyzed concurrent involvement in status offenses and delinquent behavior using "summary measures" of involvement--reported involvement in various illegal acts was summed across items and the distinction between involvement in particular acts was glossed over. A strong argument can be made for the use of summary measures: Simply, there are two types of juvenile offenses as defined by law--delinquent and status offenses--and the purpose of the analysis is to explore the degree to which adolescents are involved in one or both types of acts. However, the analyses of summary measures show that serious delinquency is not as strongly related to status offenses or to some of the sociodemographic variables as is less serious delinquency. There is evidence, then, that summary measures can mask and, therefore, sacrifice potentially important patterns of adolescent involvement in illegal behavior, whether in status offenses or delinquent acts.

Therefore, the analysis will turn to the relation between involvement in individual status offenses and general involvement in delinquent behavior. The Lafayette data set will be the focus of analysis because it has the greatest number of status offense items.[12] The objective is to gain better insight into the extent to which involvement in particular status offenses is predictive of involvement in delinquent behavior. This type of analysis is important because it has been proposed that today's truant, incorrigible, runaway, or drinker becomes tomorrow's "delinquent"--whether a drug abuser, alcoholic, property thief, or violent offender. That is, all of the specific "types" of status offenders may become more versatile delinquents. Of course, this kind of prediction is based on the assumption that there is behavioral specialization within the category of status offenses.

The anonymous self-report questionnaire from which the six status offenses (violating curfew; drinking; getting drunk; cutting class; cutting school; and staying out all night) were taken asked the respondents how many times in the past three years they had engaged in each offense. The frequency scores on each status offense were recoded to simplify analysis and data presentation: A frequency score of zero was defined as No Involvement and the rest of the distribution was trichotomized into Low, Medium, and High Involvement. (The same procedure was used to recode the delinquency scale.) Tables 8 and 9 show the relation between involvement in each status offense and involvement in delinquency.[13]

Previously, it was found that general involvement in status offenses was highly correlated with general involvement in delinquent offenses, especially with less serious delinquency. Apparently, the more highly involved an adolescent is in status offenses, the more likely he/she is also involved in delinquent behavior (or vice versa).[14] This relationship between involvement in delinquent and status offenses is replicated when one correlates each individual status offense with the delinquency scales.

As shown in Table 8, each of the six status offenses is significantly related to each of the three delinquency scales. The associations (Tau_b) between each status offense and delinquency range from .33 to .48, suggesting a relatively strong relation between involvement in delinquent and status offenses. But, again, this relation varies by the "seriousness" of delinquent involvement--there is a much stronger correlation between individual status offenses and less serious delinquency than with serious delinquency. For example, the average correlations with general delinquency (.41) and less serious delinquency (.42) are substantially higher than with serious delinquency (.24).

However, these relationships cannot convey the degree to which the status offenses differ in the proportion of adolescents reporting participation. Otherwise put, it is one thing to know that involvement in a status offense is positively related to delinquency, but one may also want to know approximately how many adolescents are committing these various types of status offenses. Engaging occasionally in one type

TABLE 8

STATUS OFFENSES BY DELINQUENCY SCALES
Lafayette Data Set (N=668)

Status Offenses	Delinquency Scales Delinquency	 Serious	 Less Serious
Curfew Violation	.33* .44**	.17 .24	.34 .29
Drinking	.48 .62	.27 .36	.50 .64
Getting Drunk	.47 .61	.22 .31	.52 .67
Cutting Class	.43 .56	.24 .32	.42 .55
Cutting School	.40 .56	.22 .31	.41 .56
Staying Out All Night	.33 .54	.30 .48	.34 .55

* = Tau_b

** = Gamma

All associations significant at .001

of offense may be more significant than engaging frequently in another if the former is rarely reported and the latter is a popular activity among peers.

These differential involvement rates are illustrated in Figure 1. The relationship between involvement in each type of status offense and delinquent behavior is depicted by a straight line in each case, but it is apparent that some status offenses are more popular than others. Staying out all night, for instance, is reported far less frequently than is curfew violation, and this holds for each of the four levels of delinquent involvement. A graph such as this can also be used to predict the chances of an adolescent's participation in particular status offenses from knowledge of delinquent involvement. For example, knowing that an adolescent is highly involved in delinquent behavior, one can predict with relative certainty that the adolescent has also violated curfew (99.3%), drunk and gotten inebriated on alcohol (93.9% and 89.2%, respectively), and cut class (93.9%) and school (79.7%).

Because there is more theoretical and practical interest in predicting from status offense involvement to delinquent behavior, the data were elaborated and reorganized in Table 9. For each level of involvement in a particular status offense, the percentage within the four levels of delinquent involvement are reported. For examples, among those adolescents

FIGURE 1

INVOLVEMENT IN DELINQUENCY BY
INDIVIDUAL STATUS OFFENSES

LaFayette Data Set (N=668)

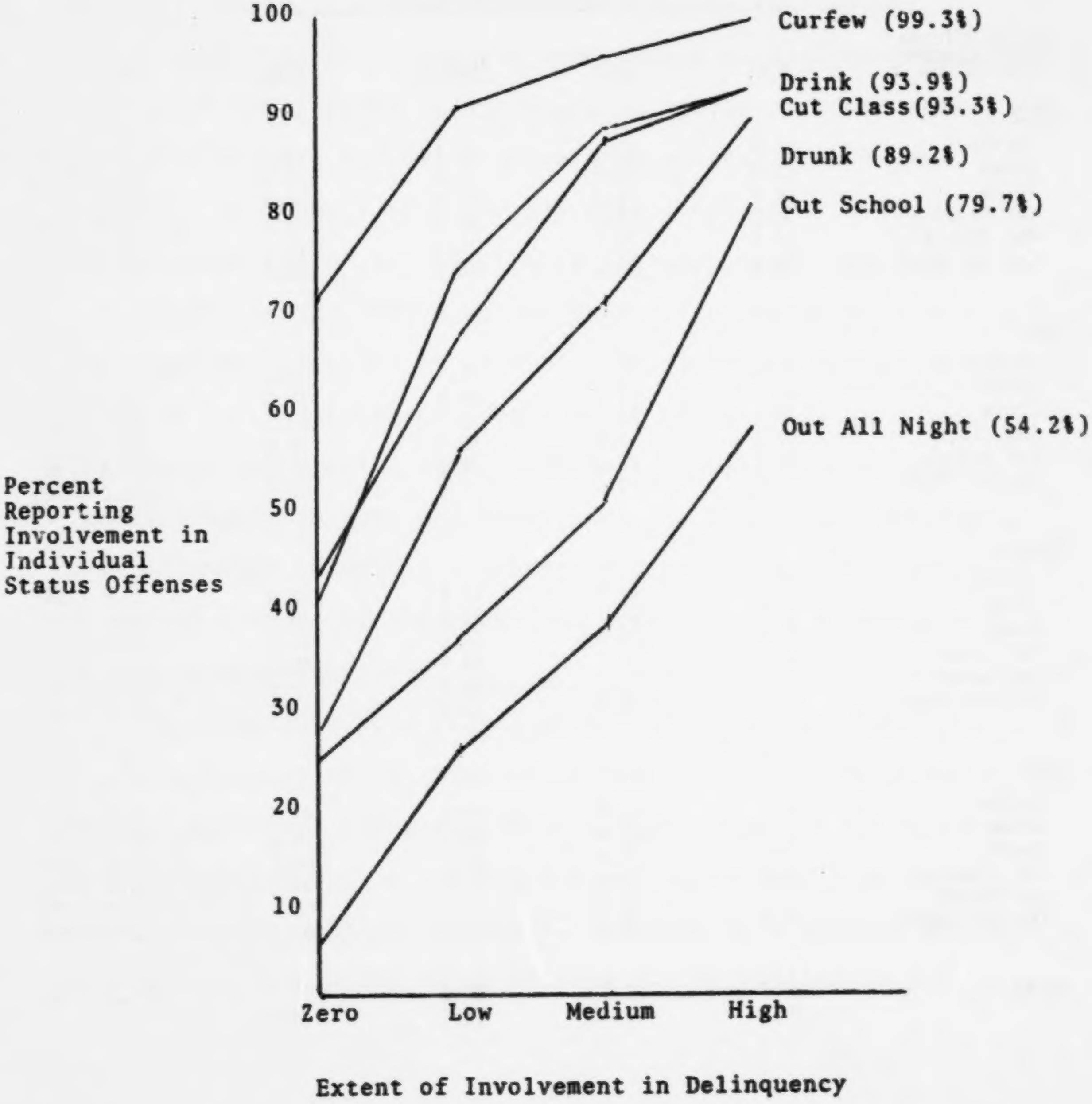

TABLE 9

INVOLVEMENT IN INDIVIDUAL STATUS OFFENSES BY INVOLVEMENT IN DELINQUENT BEHAVIOR

LAFAYETTE DATA SET (N=668)

Status Offense Involvement	Delinquent Involvement None	Low	Medium	High	Total
None					
Curfew	58.3	27.1	12.5	2.1	9.0 (48)
Drink	45.9	32.0	14.8	7.4	22.7 (122)
Drunk	34.8	34.3	22.9	8.0	37.4 (201)
Cut Class	38.2	35.4	20.1	6.3	26.8 (144)
Cut School	26.4	35.1	27.5	10.9	51.4 (276)
Out All Night	24.3	31.1	26.2	18.5	68.3 (367)
Low					
Curfew	21.1	37.4	27.2	14.3	27.4 (147)
Drink	16.7	43.3	30.0	10.0	22.3 (120)
Drunk	18.6	34.0	32.0	15.5	18.1 (97)
Cut Class	16.2	36.9	36.0	10.8	20.7 (111)
Cut School	16.5	29.4	27.1	27.1	15.8 (85)
Out All Night	7.0	25.6	32.6	32.6	8.0 (43)
Medium					
Curfew	9.7	29.9	33.6	26.9	25.0 (134)
Drink	11.0	27.1	33.5	28.4	28.8 (155)
Drunk	4.9	27.6	33.3	34.1	22.9 (123)
Cut Class	9.4	26.1	34.1	30.4	25.7 (138)
Cut School	7.4	19.8	35.8	37.0	15.1 (81)
Out All Night	5.1	28.8	32.2	33.9	11.0 (59)
High					
Curfew	11.1	18.8	26.6	43.5	38.6 (207)
Drink	1.4	10.6	29.1	58.9	26.2 (141)
Drunk	0.9	9.5	25.0	64.7	21.6 (116)
Cut Class	5.6	13.9	21.5	59.0	26.8 (144)
Cut School	2.1	10.5	18.9	68.4	17.7 (95)
Out All Night	0.0	8.8	23.5	67.7	12.7 (68)
Total	17.7 (95)	27.5 (148)	27.3 (147)	27.5 (148)	100.0 (538)

reporting no curfew violations, 58.3% report no involvement and only 2.1% report high involvement in delinquent behavior; among frequent curfew violators, 43.5% also report high involvement in delinquent behavior; among those youngsters who often stay out all night, none report no involvement in delinquent behavior, while 67.7% report high delinquent involvement.

In addition to offering a crude means to predict general delinquent involvement from a specific status offense, these data also suggest how different status offenses are interrelated. It appears that the six status offenses included in the analysis can be placed on a seriousness continuum. Only 9.0% of the sample report no involvement in curfew violations; 22.7% are not involved in drinking; 26.8% do not cut class; 37.4% do not engage in cutting school; while 68.3% have not stayed out all night. This ordering of involvement in status offenses suggests that the prevalence, incidence, and seriousness of status offense involvement may be an important issue to pursue because of the potential effect on the relationship to delinquent behavior.

To illustrate this point, only 2.1% (only one subject) of those with no curfew violations fall within the high delinquent involvement category, while a much larger 18.5% of those with no involvement in staying out all night have high delinquency scores. (The other status offenses fall between these extremes.) This makes sense because curfew violations are rather commonplace, while staying out all night is not. The same point can be made if we look at high involvement in status offenses and no involvement in delinquent offenses--only 11.1% of those who are highly involved in curfew violations report no involvement in delinquent acts, but all adolescents who frequently stay out all night are also involved in delinquent behavior.

It is also clear that high involvement in status offenses goes with high involvement in delinquent offenses: on the average, 60% of the subjects who have high levels of involvement in status offenses are also highly involved in delinquency. Otherwise put, youngsters who frequently engage in status offenses also frequently engage in delinquent behavior and, according to these data, nearly always commit at least some delinquent acts. Finally, even if an adolescent has a low level of involvement in status offenses, one would still be safe in predicting some delinquent behavior in 80-90% of the cases, depending upon the particular status offense from which the prediction is made. And this prevalence of delinquency increases to from 90-95% for medium involvement in status offenses.

In summary: 1) There are differences between status offenses in the extent of reported participation; 2) there are grounds for conceptualizing status offenses on a continuum from less to more serious behavior; and 3) involvement in individual status offenses is related to involvement in delinquent behavior.

In fact, knowing that a youngster is involved in any particular status offense allows one to infer with relatively high degrees of certainty some involvement in delinquent behavior, with the highest degree of certainty associated with the highest level of involvement in the most serious of the status offenses.

III. DELINQUENT HISTORY OF SELF-REPORTED STATUS OFFENDERS

Having shown that there is concurrent involvement in delinquent behavior and status offenses, with some important variation by type, frequency, and seriousness of offenses, the second major question will be addressed: Given a population reporting involvement in status offenses, what observations can be made regarding their past involvement in delinquent acts? Answers to this question allow an assessment of the extent to which there is specialization in status offenses and of the degree to which predelinquency (status offenses) predicts delinquency. Or, are youngsters who engage in status offenses a homogeneous and distinct group without a history of involvement in more serious delinquent acts? If youngsters who are currently involved in status offenses have engaged in delinquent behavior, the "escalation" or career development theory must be questioned seriously.

Longitudinal self-report data collected by Elliott and Voss (1974) will be used to assess the delinquent behavioral histories of high school students who report involvement in status offenses. In brief, the research followed a group of 2,617 ninth graders through the time of their anticipated graduation from high school. During the ninth and twelfth grades, the subjects completed a questionnaire which asked, among other things, about the extent of their involvement in delinquent and status offenses during the previous three years. This type of research design precluded the anonymity of subjects, but full confidentiality was assured and the attrition rate over the four years of the study was only 9%. The analysis here is based on a 50% random sample of the original sample.

To facilitate analysis of these data, delinquency and status offense scales were computed for each subject for both the junior high and senior high school periods. The extent to which a subject reported being involved in any of the delinquent or status offenses was incorporated in the computation of these scale scores. This was achieved by assigning a weight to each of the response categories before summing across the particular items included in each scale: "None" equals 0; "Once or Twice" equals 1; "Several Times" or "Three Times" equals 3; and "Very Often" equals 4. Four items comprise the status offense scale: buying or drinking alcohol; running away; defying parents; and skipping school. Six items comprise the delinquent behavior scale: taking things of little value (less than $2), medium value ($2-$50), or large value (over $50); taking a car without the owner's permission;

damaging or destroying property; and gang fighting. For the senior high school delinquency scale, using marijuana or other dangerous drugs was included with the above items. Thus, the status offense scale scores ranged from 0 to 12; the junior high delinquency scale scores ranged from 0 to 18; and the senior high delinquency scale scores ranged from 0 to 21. These in turn were collapsed so that each scale was comparably trichotomized, and the four categories comprising each scale are: No Involvement; Low, Medium, or High Involvement.[15]

The delinquent behavioral history of those reporting involvement in status offenses only during senior high school is shown in Table 10. It can be seen that more than half (53.9%) of these status offenders report that they had engaged in some delinquent behavior during their junior high school years. This finding lends credence to the notion that status offenders are versatile in their illegal behavior, and calls into question the assertion that today's status offenders become tomorrow's delinquents. Not only had these current self-reported status offenders engaged in delinquent acts, one could argue that the causal order is the opposite of escalation theory--that is, delinquent behavior in junior high may predict status offenses in senior high! It should also be noted, however, that if an adolescent reported being involved exclusively in status offenses during senior high school, the level of that involvement was low. And when a

TABLE 10

DELINQUENT HISTORY OF THOSE REPORTING INVOLVEMENT IN STATUS OFFENSES ONLY, SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

SAN DIEGO DATA SET

Junior High Delinquent Involvement[2]	Senior High Status Offense Involvement[1]			
	Low	Medium	High	Total
None	49.7	23.9	0.0	46.2
Low	47.4	71.7	50.0	50.3
Medium	2.4	4.3	50.0	3.1
High	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.5
Total	87.2(340)	11.8(46)	1.0(4)	100.0(390)

1. A score of 0 equals No Involvement; 1 through 4 equals Low Involvement; 5 through 8 equals Medium Involvement; and 9 through 12 equals High Involvment.

2. A score of 0 equals No Involvement; 1 through 6 equals Low Involvement; 7 through 12 equals Medium Involvement; and 13 through 18 equals High Involvement.

Measures of association (significance level in parentheses): Gamma = .53 (.000)

Tau_b = .19 (.000)

Tau_c = .10 (.000)

self-reported status offender also reports past delinquent involvement, the level of that involvement was also low. Thus, one could argue that the "ambiguous versatility" of these offenders is not a very illuminating finding given the low degree of involvement in general.

Table 11 presents delinquent history by the extent of involvement in status offenses in senior high school for the whole sample. Therefore, it includes all subjects who reported status offenses, including those who may have also engaged in delinquent behavior, rather than just those subjects who report status offenses only during senior high school (Table 10). While a low level of involvement in both delinquent and status offenses is a characteristic of the sample as a whole, the behavioral versatility argument gains support because 68.7% of those reporting involvement in status offenses during senior high school also report involvement in delinquent offenses during junior high school. This finding is all the more impressive given the large percentage--89%--of the total sample who admitted some participation in status offenses during senior high school. It is clear that status offenses are rather commonplace among high school students. Although the frequency of involvement is relatively low, the important point is that participation in status offenses more likely than not means past involvement in delinquent behavior as well.

TABLE 11

DELINQUENT HISTORY OF THOSE REPORTING INVOLVEMENT IN STATUS OFFENSES DURING SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

SAN DIEGO DATA SET

Junior High Delinquent Involvement	Senior High Status Offense Involvement				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Total
None	56.3	36.6	19.6	8.8	34.0(389)
Low	43.7	59.9	74.0	64.7	61.5(703)
Medium	0.0	2.9	6.0	26.5	4.0(46)
High	0.0	0.6	0.4	0.0	0.4(5)
Total	11.0(126)	62.8(718)	23.2(265)	3.0(34)	100.0(1143)

Measures of association (significance level in parentheses): Gamma = .46(.000)

Tau_b = .24(.000)

Tau_c = .17(.000)

Correlation coefficients computed for both Tables 10 and 11 indicate that adolescents who are more highly involved in status offenses during senior high school are more highly involved in delinquent offenses during junior high school. And Table 12 shows that this pattern of involvement predominates during both junior and senior high school. This information lends further support to the position that those committing status offenses are generally not a distinct group from those engaging in delinquent behavior.

However, the figures in Table 12 make another point clear: Different patterns of involvement do exist, and there appear to be significant differences between "offense groups" in basic demographic characteristics. Those reporting no involvement or involvement in status offenses only are much more likely to be female, while those reporting involvement in both delinquent and status offenses or delinquent offenses only are more likely to be male.

The sample contains 25.3% nonwhite adolescents, who are proportionately underrepresented in the status offenses only category and overrepresented in both the no involvement and delinquent offenses only categories. Those reporting involvement in both status and delinquent offenses report the highest percentage of one-parent families. To some extent, then, distinctions exist between different patterns of involvement in delinquent and status offenses. However, one might dismiss

TABLE 12

PATTERNS OF INVOLVEMENT IN DELINQUENT AND STATUS OFFENSES
JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

SAN DIEGO DATA SET

Sample Characteristics	Involvement Pattern No Involvement	Status Offenses	Delinquent Offenses	Status & Delinquent Offenses	Total
Junior High School					
% Male	38.3	37.9	55.8	56.4	49.9(581)
% Non-White	31.7	17.1	35.3	22.9	25.3(295)
% One-Parent	8.0	9.1	10.3	11.4	10.3(117)
% Police Contact[1]	3.8	7.1	9.5	12.9	9.8(114)
Total	15.7(183)	19.2(224)	16.3(190)	48.7(567)	100.0(1164)
Senior High School					
% Male	32.3	32.1	50.0	63.5	49.9(581)
% Non-White	34.3	22.4	42.9	24.7	25.3(295)
% One-Parent	12.2	11.8	5.4	14.0	12.8(134)
% Police Contact[2]	2.2	4.3	4.8	8.0	6.2(72)
Total	8.0(93)	33.8(393)	3.6(42)	54.6(636)	100.0(1164)

1. Police contact prior to and during 9th grade.
2. Police contact during 12th grade only.

this point as academic since the data also show that those who most often come to the attention of the police are those who admit involvement in both delinquent and status offenses.[16]

IV. PREDICTING DELINQUENT BEHAVIOR AND STATUS OFFENSES

It is clear that many youths who are involved in status offenses have a delinquent behavioral history. Furthermore, it has also been shown that a positive relationship exists between concurrent involvement in status offenses and delinquent behavior--the higher the involvement in one type of illegal behavior, the higher in the other. However, these findings do not address directly the third major question, the issue of prediction: Given reported involvement in status offenses, what observations can be made regarding subsequent involvement in status offenses and delinquent behavior? Or, will self-reported status offenders become involved in more serious illegal acts? This is, again, the "escalation" or "career" question: Will today's status offenders become tomorrow's delinquents, or once a status offender (or delinquent) always a status offender (or delinquent)?

The analysis focuses on the 224 cases in the San Diego data set who reported involvement in status offenses only during their junior high school years. Although they comprise only 19.2% of the total sample, it is important to isolate these cases to learn something about the future behavior of young self-reported status offenders. The longitudinal design of the San Diego study allows us to "predict" to these subjects' behavior during senior high school. As they grow older, will they remain status offenders or diversify their pattern of illegal involvement to include delinquent behavior?

What is immediately apparent in Tables 13 and 14 is the lack of variation on our predictor variable--the extent of involvement in status offenses during junior high school. In 98% of the cases there is low involvement. And of those youngsters who have low involvement in status offenses during junior high, 10.6% have no involvement and 71% have low involvement in status offenses during senior high school, while 55.9% of them have no involvement and 43.2% have low involvement in delinquency during senior high. Thus, all that can be said is that adolescents who are involved exclusively in status offenses at an early age will subsequently maintain a low rate of illegal involvement, whether the pattern includes delinquency, status offenses, or both. Keep in mind, however, that these early "pure" status offenders represent a small proportion of youths who engage in illegal behavior--again, it seems that even at younger ages those youths who are involved in illegal behavior do a "little bit of everything."

The specific patterns of involvement during senior high school for those who report involvement only in status offenses during junior high are presented in Table 15. It

TABLE 13

PREDICTING THE STATUS OFFENSE INVOLVEMENT OF THOSE REPORTING INVOLVEMENT IN STATUS OFFENSES ONLY IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

SAN DIEGO SET (N=224)

Senior High Status Offense Involvement	Junior High Status Offense Involvement			
	Low	Medium	High	Total
None	10.6	0.0	0.0	10.4(23)
Low	71.0	50.0	0.0	70.6(156)
Medium	17.1	50.0	0.0	17.6(39)
High	1.4	0.0	0.0	1.4(3)
Total	98.2(217)	1.8(4)	0.0(0)	100.0(221)

Measures of association (significant level in parentheses): Gamma = .65(.370)
Tau_b = .10(.061)
Tau_c = .03(.061)

TABLE 14

PREDICTING THE DELINQUENT INVOLVEMENT OF THOSE REPORTING INVOLVEMENT IN STATUS OFFENSES ONLY IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

SAN DIEGO DATA SET (N=224)

Senior High Delinquent Involvement	Junior High Status Offense Involvement			
	Low	Medium	High	Total
None	55.9	25.0	0.0	55.3(120)
Low	43.2	75.0	0.0	43.8(95)
Medium	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.9(2)
High	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0(0)
Total	98.2(213)	1.8(4)	0.0(0)	100.0(217)

Measures of association (significance level in parentheses): Gamma = .56(.444)

Tau_b = .08(.116)

Tau_c = .02(.116)

is revealed that many maintain the same involvement pattern--apparently only 8% of them discontinue their involvement in illegal behavior, while 48.7% report exclusive involvement in status offenses during both junior and senior high school. However, a substantial percentage (39.7%) of those involved exclusively in status offenses during junior high became involved in both delinquent and status offenses in high school, and a small 3.6% specialize in delinquency. It appears that one cannot effectively predict the pattern of involvement of those who are exclusively self-reported status offenders because they are almost as likely to "diversify" to both delinquent and status offenses as they are to "specialize" in status offenses. Once again, the data suggest that there is no clear-cut pattern of career development, beginning with less serious status offenses and continuing this pattern or progressing to more serious delinquent behavior. That is, it seems that about half of the small number of young status offenders specialize and about half become more versatile offenders.

Overall, the increase in the prevalence of illegal behavior from the ninth to the twelfth grade seems to be attributable primarily to youths who add status offenses to their behavioral repertoires during high school. These findings contradict the predictions which are institutionalized within the philosophy and operation of the juvenile court.

TABLE 15

PREDICTING THE PATTERN OF INVOLVEMENT IN DELINQUENT AND STATUS OFFENSES OF THOSE REPORTING INVOLVEMENT IN STATUS OFFENSES ONLY IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

SAN DIEGO DATA SET (N=224)

Senior High School Involvement Pattern	Percent (N)
No Involvement	8.0(18)
Involvement in Status Offenses Only	48.7(109)
Involvement in Delinquent Offenses Only	3.6(8)
Involvement in Both Status and Delinquent Offenses	39.7(89)
Total	100.0(224)

Young status offenders do not seem to gravitate predictably toward serious delinquent behavior--nor do young delinquents for that matter. Of course, these findings do not take into account the potential impact of juvenile justice system processing on any of these categories of youngsters, but they suggest strongly that there is no necessary escalation or predictable career development pattern. The next question, then, is which type of offender ends up most often in the juvenile justice system?

V. DELINQUENT AND STATUS OFFENSES AND OFFICIAL REACTION

The objective in this section is to examine the relative probabilities of official intervention by police and juvenile justice agencies for delinquent and status offenses. Data from three studies will be analyzed, each containing self-reported illegal behavior and indicators of subjects' contacts with juvenile justice officials as a result of some delinquent act or status offense. The first study was conducted by Nye and Short (1957) in the middle 1950's. A self-report questionnaire was administered to a sample of high school students in the Tri-Cities area of Washington State. The second study, conducted in 1967 by Gold (1970), consisted of interviews with a representative nationwide sample of 13 to 16 year-olds; and two years after the interviews were completed, additional data were gathered from the records of law enforcement agencies in each respondent's area of residence. The third study was conducted by Elliott and Voss (1974) in the mid-sixties, primarily in San Diego; the official data include both police and juvenile court records on a cohort of subjects over a four-year time period.

All of the data sets have the usual limitations with respect to official data (cf. Hindelang, 1974). Official intervention of any kind is a rare phenomenon in representative or general samples of adolescents. For example, in the Tri-Cities sample only 4.7% of the respondents reported having been "arrested and convicted." With relatively few official delinquents, it becomes almost impossible to analyze the simultaneous effects of several variables, and conclusions and generalizations must be tentative.

The offical data do not indicate when the respondent experienced intervention, nor do they allow the specification of the extant offense responsible for each intervention. Thus, while the scales of delinquent behavior and status offenses represent behavioral histories compiled over time, one cannot know at what point in this history or for which self-reported act an official intervention may have occurred. This means that there may not be a necessary temporal correspondence between the self-reported acts and official intervention. Fortunately, the National and San Diego data also include actual records from the files of criminal justice agencies, so that relatively valid and reliable indicators of official intervention are available. However, the question of time-order remains problematic, and the specific offenses of record are unknown, although the San Diego data include the "type" of offense.

In the Tri-Cities study, respondents were asked whether they had been arrested and convicted for each of their self-reported delinquent acts. The National interview schedule was also limited to self-reports of "police contacts" for the specific list of sixteen offenses. This could eliminate official contacts for types of behavior not included in the questionnaires. Both measures may be biased conservatively in the direction of under-reporting official intervention, especially for status offenders who are more likely to be referred by "unofficial" sources for nonspecific offenses, supposed attributes, or imputed needs.

To facilitate data analysis, separate scales were constructed for delinquent behavior and status offenses for each data set.[17]

Tri-Cities

Table 16 shows for the Tri-Cities sample the relationship between status offenses and delinquent behavior, and the percent of cases reporting arrest and conviction. (In each cell of the table, the top figure is the percent of cases at that combination of status offense and delinquency scale scores and the bottom figure is the corresponding percent of cases in the cell with official records.) These data show

TABLE 16

REPORTS OF ARREST AND CONVICTION BY INVOLVEMENT IN DELINQUENT AND STATUS OFFENSES

TRI-CITIES DATA SET (N=768)

Status Offenses	Delinquent Offenses				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Total
None	42.6	32.7	15.2	4.8	28.5(219)
Arrest-Conviction	2.1	3.2	0.0	0.0	2.3(5)
Low	45.7	39.4	39.3	20.5	39.2(301)
Arrest-Conviction	2.9	3.6	4.3	11.8	4.0(12)
Medium	10.8	21.5	29.8	31.3	21.4(164)
Arrest-Conviction	4.2	1.6	9.4	15.4	6.7(11)
High	0.8	6.3	15.7	43.3	10.9(84)
Arrest-Conviction	0.0	16.7	10.7	5.6	9.5(8)
Total	99.9(223)	99.9(284)	100.0(178)	100.0(83)	100.0(768)
Arrest-Conviction	1.7(6)	3.9(11)	6.2(11)	9.6(8)	4.7(36)

Variables	Correlations			
	Tau_c	Sig	Gamma	x^2Sig
Delinquency x Status Offenses	.35	.000	.50	.000
Arrest/Conviction x Delinquency	.04	.005	.32	n.s.
Status Offenses = None	.00	n.s.	-.09	n.s.
Status Offenses = Low	.03	n.s.	.25	n.s.
Status Offenses = Medium	.10	.012	.51	n.s.
Status Offenses = High	-.08	n.s.	-.33	n.s.
Arrest/Conviction x Status Offense	.05	.002	.37	.028
Delinquency = None	.01	n.s.	.18	n.s.
Delinquency = Low	.02	n.s.	.21	.031
Delinquency = Medium	.08	.022	.48	n.s.
Delinquency = High	-.05	n.s.	-.20	n.s.

that, while status offenses and delinquency are relatively strongly correlated (tau_c = .35; gamma = .50), self-reported official delinquency ("arrest and conviction") is nearly uncorrelated with either type of self-reported illegal behavior. The zero-order correlations of official intervention with status offenses and delinquent behavior are small but significant, while the controlled relations are typically nonsignificant and inconsistent in direction. Finally, the thirty-six subjects reporting arrest and conviction may be too few to be confident of even this relatively simple analysis.

In order to increase the number of official delinquents in some cells of the table, the status offense and delinquent behavior scales were dichotomized so that "none" and "low" become the Low category, and "medium" and "high" become the High category. Cross-tabulating these dichotomized scales produced a four-cell table which represents degrees of involvement and specialization in status offenses and delinquent behavior. In order to simplify analysis, a single variable, "pattern of involvement," was created from these four combinations (Figure 2). Conformists are subjects who have low scores on both the delinquency and status offense scales; cases in the Status Offender category scored high on the status offense scale and low on the delinquent behavior scale; Delinquents scored high on the delinquent behavior scale and

FIGURE 2

PATTERNS OF INVOLVEMENT

Status Offenses	Delinquency	
	High	Low
High	Versatile	Status Offender
Low	Delinquent	Conformist

---

low on the status offense scale; and Versatile subjects scored high on both scales.[18]

Inspection of Table 17 reveals that status offense and delinquent behavior "specialists" are equally likely to report official intervention (4.8% and 4.2% respectively) and that approximately twice the percentage of "versatiles" (9.8%) report official intervention. Apparently, the amount and not the kind of juvenile illegal behavior is more important in determining arrest and conviction.

National

The Tri-Cities sample was drawn over twenty years ago from a cluster of three small cities. Consequently, it may be difficult to generalize from these data to conclusions about official delinquency. The National sample, on the other hand, was drawn to represent the population of 13-16

TABLE 17

REPORTS OF ARREST AND CONVICTION BY PATTERN OF INVOLVEMENT TRI-CITIES DATA SET (N=781)

	Pattern of Involvement				
Arrest or Conviction	Conformist	Status Offender	Delinquent	Versatile	Total
Never	96.9	95.2	95.8	90.2	95.3 (744)
One or More	3.1	4.8	4.2	9.8	4.7 (37)
Total	100.0 (415)	100.0 (105)	100.0 (118)	100.0 (143)	100.0 (781)

$V = .12(.015)$
$Tau_c = .05(.003)$
$Gamma = .35$

year-old juveniles in the U.S. and, hence, can be assumed also to be somewhat representative of law enforcement and juvenile justice jurisdictions nationwide.

In Table 18 the measure of official delinquency is self-reported "police contacts," a less serious type of intervention than used in Tri-Cities and, therefore, one which should be reported by a higher proportion of youngsters. Police contact in this sample is slightly more highly correlated with status offenses than with delinquent behavior. While the zero-order correlations of status offenses and delinquent behavior with police contact are not substantially different (.16 and .14 respectively), the marginal percentage of high-involvement status offenders who report police contacts is twice as large as the percentage of high-involvement delinquents (42.9% vs. 20.2%). However, the highest proportion of police contact is found among those youngsters who have high levels of involvement in both delinquent behavior and status offenses (52.9%). And examining the percentage of police contact by delinquent behavior with status offense held constant (within-row comparisons) reveals rather small and inconsistent differences, while the percentages of police contact by status offense within delinquent behavior categories (within-column comparisons) are more substantial and more consistent. What these data suggest is that more frequent and versatile juvenile offenders--those who engage often in delinquent and status offenses--are most likely to

TABLE 18

REPORTS OF POLICE CONTACTS BY INVOLVEMENT IN DELINQUENT AND STATUS OFFENSES

NATIONAL DATA SET (N=845)

	Delinquent Offenses				
Status Offenses	None	Low	Medium	High	Total
None	74.0	44.8	26.5	15.6	43.1 (364)
Contact	0.0	3.8	6.3	0.0	2.5 (9)
Low	21.1	38.3	46.6	33.9	35.8 (303)
Contact	2.3	7.2	10.8	10.8	8.3 (25)
Medium	3.8	13.1	18.5	34.9	15.3 (129)
Contact	0.0	5.1	20.5	23.7	15.5 (20)
High	1.0	3.4	8.4	15.6	5.8 (49)
Contact	0.0	50.0	35.0	52.9	42.9 (21)
Total	99.9(208)	99.6(290)	100.0(238)	100.0 (109)	100.0 (845)
Contact	0.5(1)	6.9 (20)	13.4 (32)	20.2 (22)	8.9 (75)

	Correlations			
Variables	Tau_c	Sig	Gamma	x^2Sig
Delinquency x Status Offenses	.35	.000	.52	.000
Contact x Delinquency	.14	.000	.55	.000
Status Offenses = None	.04	.007	.61	.026
Status Offenses = Low	.06	.040	.29	n.s.
Status Offenses = Medium	.18	.005	.49	n.s.
Status Offenses = High	.13	n.s.	.20	n.s.
Contact x Status Offenses	.16	.000	.65	.000
Delinquency = None	.01	n.s.	.88	.000
Delinquency = Low	.08	.005	.44	.000
Delinquency = Medium	.16	.001	.46	.004
Delinquency = High	.34	.000	.70	.000

have contacts with the police and that involvement in status offenses increases the likelihood of police contact for those youngsters who are also committing delinquent acts.

In Table 19 the relationship of status offenses and delinquent behavior with official records are similar to those with self-reports of official intervention, but more pronounced. The percentages of subjects with official records increase consistently with status offense scores, both overall and within levels of delinquent involvement. The same consistency and magnitude of increase is not seen as delinquent behavior scores increase. And measures of association are consistent with the direction of the percentage differences--that is, status offenses (tau_c=.13; gamma=.69) are more strongly correlated with having a record than delinquency (tau_c=.08; gamma=.44), both overall and within delinquent behavior catetories.

Table 20 was constructed by collapsing the status offense and delinquent behavior scales in the same manner as was done with the Tri-Cities data. It shows the percentages of cases in each pattern of involvement who reported police contacts or who had official records. As would be expected, very small percentages of cases in the conformist category were officially delinquent (3.4% and 2% respectively). The percentage of status offense specialists (11.9%) reporting "police contacts" is larger than the percentage of delinquents (8.8%) and this differential increases for "official records" (16.9% versus

TABLE 19

OFFICIAL RECORDS BY INVOLVEMENT IN DELINQUENT AND STATUS OFFENSES

NATIONAL DATA SET (N=845)

	Delinquent Offenses				
Status Offenses	None	Low	Medium	High	Total
None	74.0	44.8	26.5	15.6	43.1 (364)
Record	1.3	0.8	1.6	0.0	1.1 (4)
Low	21.2	38.3	46.6	33.9	35.8 (303)
Record	0.0	4.5	9.0	8.1	5.9 (18)
Medium	3.8	13.1	18.5	34.9	15.3 (129)
Record	25.0	10.3	6.8	23.7	14.0 (18)
High	1.0	3.4	8.4	15.6	5.8 (49)
Record	0.0	40.0	20.0	29.4	26.5 (13)
Total	100.0 (208)	99.6(290)	100.0(238)	100.0(109)	100.0 (845)
Record	1.9 (4)	4.8(14)	7.6(18)	15.6(17)	6.3 (53)

	Correlations			
Variables	Tau_c	Sig	Gamma	X^2Sig
Delinquency by Offenses	.35	.000	.52	.000
Official Records x Delinquency	.08	.000	.44	.000
Status Offenses = None	.00	n.s.	-.08	n.s.
Status Offenses = Low	.06	.020	.42	n.s.
Status Offenses - Medium	.07	n.s.	.21	n.s.
Status Offenses = High	.00	n.s.	.00	n.s.
Official Records x Status Offense	.13	.000	.69	.000
Delinquency = None	.03	n.s.	.57	.000
Delinquency = Low	.11	.000	.75	.000
Delinquency = Medium	.08	.010	.42	.040
Delinquency = High	.23	.000	.60	.030

TABLE 20

REPORTS OF POLICE CONTACTS AND OFFICIAL RECORDS BY PATTERN OF INVOLVEMENT

NATIONAL DATA SET (N=847)

	Pattern of Involvement				
Official Delinquency	Conformist	Status Offender	Delinquent	Versatile	Total
Police Contact	3.4	11.9	8.8	28.6	9.1 (77)
Official Record	2.0	16.9	6.1	17.6	6.4 (54)
N	441	59	228	119	847

	Correlations				
	Gamma	Tau_c	Sig	V	x^2Sig
Contact x Pattern	.60	.15	.000	.29	.000
Record x Pattern	.54	.10	.000	.24	.000

6.1%). However, a substantially larger percentage (28.6%) of versatiles reported police contacts. There is also a substantial difference between versatiles (17.6%) and delinquency specialists (6.1%) in the percentage with official records, but no difference between versatiles and status offenders (16.9%). Apparently, the commission of status offenses may increase a youth's risk of official intervention, perhaps to an even greater extent than the commission of delinquent acts.

San Diego

The relationships of delinquent behavior and status offenses with official delinquency in the San Diego sample are similar to those found in the other two samples (Tables 21 and 22). Both types of illegal behavior are positively and significantly correlated with official delinquency (Phase 1: .11 and .08 respectively; Phase 4: .07 and .07 respectively). Delinquent behavior is perhaps slightly more strongly correlated with official delinquency. As in the Tri-Cities and National data sets, the overall correlation between illegal behavior and official intervention is low, and even among respondents reporting the highest frequencies of infraction, the great majority do not appear in official records.

Table 23 shows the relation between official delinquency and pattern of involvement. It is evident that involvement in delinquent behavior is somewhat more likely to result in

TABLE 21

OFFICIAL DELINQUENCY BY INVOLVEMENT IN DELINQUENT AND STATUS OFFENSES

SAN DIEGO DATA SET, NINTH GRADE (N=1142)

Status Offenses	Delinquent Offenses				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Total
None	177	153	28	3	361
Record	3.4	7.2	7.9	66.7	6.6(24)
Low	177	219	79	26	501
Record	5.1	8.7	12.7	15.4	8.4(42)
Medium	33	76	49	41	199
Record	12.1	9.2	16.3	17.1	13.1(26)
High	3	14	20	44	81
Record	0.0	14.3	5.0	34.1	22.2(18)
Total	390	462	176	114	1142
Record	4.9(19)	8.4(39)	13.6(24)	24.6(28)	9.6(110)

	Correlations			
Variables	Tau$_c$	Sig	Gamma	x^2Sig
Official Delinquency x Delinquency	.11	.000	.43	.000
Status Offenses = None	.09	.001	.53	.000
Status Offenses = Low	.06	.008	.31	.108
Status Offenses = Medium	.06	.131	.18	.560
Status Offenses = High	.25	.005	.62	.039
Official Delinquency x Status Offense	.08	.000	.30	.000
Delinquency = None	.04	.053	.30	.000
Delinquency = Low	.02	.208	.11	.801
Delinquency = Medium	-.04	.247	-.12	.561
Delinquency = High	.12	.083	.24	.059

TABLE 22

OFFICIAL DELINQUENCY BY INVOLVEMENT IN DELINQUENT AND STATUS OFFENSES

SAN DIEGO DATA SET, TWELFTH GRADE (N=1118)

Status Offenses	Delinquent Offenses				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Total
None	76	25	8	6	115
Record	2.6	8.0	0.0	0.0	3.5(4)
Low	196	126	33	15	370
Record	2.0	5.6	6.1	6.7	3.8(14)
Medium	218	122	57	28	335
Record	4.7	3.3	5.3	17.9	5.4(18)
High	45	91	82	80	298
Record	11.1	5.5	8.5	21.2	11.4(34)
Total	445	364	180	129	1118
Record	3.8(17)	4.9(18)	6.7(12)	17.8(23)	6.3(70)

Variables	Correlations			
	Tau_c	Sig	Gamma	x^2Sig
Official Delinquency x Delinquency	.07	.000	.40	.000
Status Offenses = None	.01	.338	.18	.534
Status Offenses = Low	.04	.032	.40	.316
Status Offenses = Medium	.04	.067	.27	.021
Status Offenses = High	.10	.007	.33	.009
Official Delinquency x Status Offenses	.07	.000	.40	.000
Delinquency = None	.04	.011	.41	.033
Delinquency = Low	-.01	.319	-.09	.711
Delinquency = Medium	.04	.177	.24	.745
Delinquency = High	.10	.061	.35	.359

official intervention than is involvement in status offenses. If the patterns of involvement are considered to be ranked according to the degree of social harm they represent, then the apparent increasing likelihood of official intervention from the conformist to the versatile offender is appropriate. (The percentage of delinquency specialists with official records in the 12th grade is inconsistent with the general trend, but the number of cases is too small to be considered reliable.)

Is it the Behavior or Something Else?

The possibility remains that the differences in the probability of intervention are spurious. That is, status offenders (or delinquents or versatiles) may be concentrated in some category of youths who are disproportionately likely to become official delinquents for other reasons, such as their sex, race, family organization, associates, age, school performance, and so on.

Analyzing the National data set, it is clear that, in general, the relationships of patterns of involvement with official delinquency *within* categories of several potentially important variables--ones which might account for the difference in intervention--support the zero-order relationships. For example, both status offense specialists and versatiles disproportionately are members of nonintact families, have lower grade point averages, and are older, but the zero-order

TABLE 23

OFFICIAL DELINQUENCY BY PATTERN OF INVOLVEMENT
SAN DIEGO DATA SET, NINTH AND TWELFTH GRADES (N=1164)

Official Record	Pattern of Involvement				
	Conformist	Status Offender	Delinquent	Versatile	Total
Ninth Grade					
None	93.9	89.8	83.8	79.5	90.2
1 or More	6.1	10.2	16.2	20.5	9.8
Total	100.0(733)	100.0(127)	100.0(148)	100.0(156)	100.0(1164)
Twelfth Grade					
None	96.8	94.4	95.2	87.0	93.8
1 or More	3.2	5.6	4.8	13.0	6.2
Total	100.0(463)	100.0(392)	100.0(62)	100.0(247)	100.0(1164)

	Correlations			
	Tau_c	Sig	V	X^2Sig
Ninth Grade:	.10	.000	.18	.000
Twelfth Grade:	.07	.000	.15	.000

relation holds for boys and girls. Controlling for socioeconomic status and delinquent peers also fails to change the original relationships.

In short, youths specializing in status offenses may be somewhat more likely than those specializing in delinquent behavior to experience police contact and considerably more likely to appear in official records. But versatiles--youths who are relatively heavily involved in both types of illegal behavior--are the most likely to experience police contact. But, apparently, a large proportion of these contacts remain unrecorded, since the percentage of versatiles and status offense specialists with official records is virtually the same.

If these findings on the relationships among delinquency, status offenses, and official reaction are taken at face value, they support the conclusions that, in general, the juvenile justice system: 1) most often selects for attention (contact) and intervention (record) relatively serious offenders--those versatile youngsters who engage in both delinquent and status offenses; 2) selects for intervention almost equally those youngsters who are status offense specialists and versatiles; and 3) selects for attention and intervention status offense specialists over delinquency specialists. In other words, the greatest risk of juvenile justice system processing is among versatile juvenile offenders, followed by those who engage primarily in status offenses, and then those who specialize in delinquent behavior and avoid status offenses altogether.

Why is this the case? One plausible explanation draws on the difference in visibility of status offenses compared with delinquent acts. Cutting school, defying parents, running away, and drinking are relatively visible acts, and it is difficult for the actor to conceal the act and his identity as its perpetrator. A youth missing from school or home, screaming at parents, or drunk in public is likely to be noticed by parents or authorities. Delinquent acts, on the other hand, sometimes can be concealed entirely (e.g., undetected shoplifting), and the actor often can protect his or her identity from victims and authorities. Even though the observers of status offenses may be less likely than victims of delinquent acts to report such offenses to law enforcement officials, victims of delinquent acts are often unable to report a perpetrator.

Second, and contributing to their higher visibility, status offenses tend to have a longer duration than delinquent acts. An act of truancy or illegal drinking may persist for a matter of hours and a runaway possibly for days. Assaults, thefts, and property destruction, by contrast, tend to be more brief episodes.

Third, the apparent overselection of status offenders may reflect the use--or abuse--of this legal category to handle juveniles known or thought to have committed delinquent acts. The common feature of the various acts which tend to be legally defined as status offenses is denial of control or authority.

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A juvenile is supposed to be under the supervision of adults, either parents or others serving *in loco parentis*. Hence, violations of statutes defining truancy, running away, curfew restrictions, or defiance of parents, may be taken as denials or evasions of mandated supervision or authority. Underage drinking may be taken as a denial of supervision if the inhibitions which drinking tends to overcome are seen as a form of indirect control. And "incorrigibility," "beyond control," "ungovernability," are by definition denials of supervision, control, and authority.

Fourth, when presented with status offenses, officials may impute other characteristics to the offender which may be used to justify the intervention. For example, the assumption that these types of youths have more serious family problems and, therefore, a greater "need" for the services the juvenile justice system has to offer, may mean more official intervention.

Fifth, for a variety of reasons--ranging from the apparent characteristics of the family to the predicted inability to establish guilt beyond a reasonable doubt in a fact-finding hearing--the "charge" may be bargained or reduced from delinquency to a status offense. The potential delinquent is relabeled as a status offender--one over whom the juvenile court maintains jurisdiction and, ultimately, control.

VI. CONCLUSION

The issue of jurisdiction over status offenses is a complex and difficult one, especially since there has been little empirical evidence upon which to base policy decisions, either for or against maintaining, restricting, or abandoning jurisdiction. Typically, juvenile justice policy reforms which impact status offenders--diversion, deinstitutionalization, jurisdiction--have been based on the assumptions that status offenders are "different" than delinquents in terms of behavior and needs and that there is "escalation" in the seriousness of offender career from status offender to delinquent, especially after a youngster enters the juvenile justice system. Clearly, arguments for and against jurisdiction and policy decisions should rest on a foundation more substantial than assumption, belief, emotion, political ideology, or favored juvenile justice philosophy.

This report has attempted to illuminate the issue through an empirical assessment of juvenile illegal behavior, comparing involvement in delinquent behavior and status offenses and, in so doing, generating answers to four research questions which relate to the "difference" between delinquents and status offenders and to the "escalation" of illegal involvement. Below, each of the questions is reprised, and the answers to each which emerged from the correlational and regression analyses of six self-reported delinquency data sets are reviewed. Finally, the implications for the policy issue of jurisdiction over status offenses are discussed.

1. Is there concurrent involvement in delinquent behavior and status offenses? Do youngsters who commit status offenses (or delinquent acts) tend to "specialize" in one kind of offense or are they "versatile" in their illegal involvement?

It is clear that there is concurrent involvement in delinquent behavior and status offenses--there does not seem to be substantial and significant differentiation in involvement in illegal behavior. General involvement in status offenses is highly correlated with general involvement in delinquency, especially with less serious delinquency. The strength of the relation between involvement in status offenses and less serious delinquency suggest that many youngsters who engage in status offenses are not concurrently involved in serious delinquency but, more likely, are involved in less serious delinquency. An implication is that one cannot differentiate involvement in status offenses from delinquency, but rather, there may be two constellations of juvenile illegal behavior--one of petty illegal behavior, which includes status offenses and less serious delinquency, and the other of serious delinquency.

The manner in which other variables--for example, age, sex, SES, school performance, peer influence--are related to delinquent and status offenses supports the conclusion that the most meaningful differentiation is between petty and serious offenses, rather than between delinquent and status offenses. Peer influence, sex, and age are related in the same way to status offenses and less serious delinquency, but not to serious delinquency (school performance is significantly related to each type of offense, while SES is not significantly associated with any of them). Peer influence varies by the seriousness of the behavior--it is most important for status offenses and less serious delinquency and least important for serious delinquency. Sex is most strongly related to serious delinquency because boys are much more involved in these types of crimes; sex is weakly related to less serious delinquency and especially to status offenses because girls are more likely to commit these types of illegal acts. Age is not related to serious delinquency but is positively related to both status offenses and less serious delinquency--involvement in these two types of petty illegal behavior increases with age. In short, important correlates or "causes" are related differently to status offenses and less serious delinquency on the one hand and to serious delinquency on the other, suggesting again that there are two constellations of illegal behavior differentiable primarily on the basis of the "seriousness" of the behavior, rather than on the basis of legal attribution.

These conclusions are based on simple zero-order correlation analyses, but partial correlation analyses did not change the original relations. And more significantly, multivariate regression analyses, which compared the relative effect of each of the same set of correlates or causes on delinquent and status offenses while simultaneously controlling for the effect of each of the other variables, also corroborate the original findings. Sex, peer influence, school performance, age, and SES, taken together, are not as important in an explanation of serious delinquency as they are in an explanation of less serious delinquency and status offenses, where they are equally important. Peer influence and school performance are especially important correlates of less serious delinquency and status offenses. Again, there seem to be different "causes" of petty illegal behavior and of serious delinquency, suggesting an important difference between involvement in status offenses and less serious delinquency and in serious delinquency.

The relationship between concurrent "general" involvement in delinquent and status offenses are corroborated when the relationships between involvement in "individual" status offenses and delinquency are examined. In general, the more involved an adolescent is in any particular status offense, the more involved in delinquency. Even if there is low involvement in status offenses, one is safe in predicting some involvement in delinquency in 80-90% of the cases. This relation also varies by the seriousness of delinquency--there are much stronger relationships between individual status offenses and less serious delinquency than with serious delinquency. And, as important perhaps, the relation also varies by the seriousness of the status offense. Youngsters who are highly involved in the most serious status offenses are more likely to be highly involved in delinquency, especially in serious delinquency.

In summary, there is concurrent involvement in delinquent and status offenses, whether one examines general involvement or involvement in individual status offenses. There is important variation in the relation by seriousness of each type of offense, and there seem to be two major categories of illegal involvement which do not correspond to the legal distinction between delinquent and status offenses but rather to the type and seriousness of the acts--one is petty illegal behavior, which includes status offenses and less serious delinquency, and the other is serious delinquency.

From these findings one can infer that there are not behaviorally distinct groups of status offenders and of delinquents, that there is not exclusive offense specialization, and that if there is a significant "difference" between status offenders and delinquents it is the legal attribution as one or the other, because the most significant difference in behavior is between youngsters who engage in status offenses and less serious delinquency and those who engage in serious delinquency. The fact that, in general, status offenders and delinquents are apparently not that different behaviorally should not be taken to mean, therefore, that they should be treated in the same way by the juvenile justice system. This would be an incomplete and unfair inference, because those youngsters involved in status offenses and less serious delinquency are different from those involved in serious delinquency. One could infer, therefore, that these two categories of petty and serious offenders should be treated differently by the juvenile justice system.

Instead of proposing that jurisdiction over status offenses be restricted or abandoned, one could argue on the basis of the evidence that jurisdiction should be restricted or abandoned over petty offenders--those who engage in status offenses and less serious delinquency. There is already precedent in the move to deinstitutionalize status offenders and less serious delinquents at the federal level, and some states have administrative procedures incorporated in sentencing guidelines which, in effect, constitute a de facto jurisdictional restriction or abandonment of status offenders and less serious delinquents.

The second and third questions relate to the issue of "escalation" or career development from involvement in status offenses to more serious delinquency.

2. Among youngsters who engage in status offenses, did they engage in delinquent behavior?

Youngsters involved in status offenses more likely than not were previously involved in delinquency. An examination of the behavioral history of senior high school students who engage in status offenses (89% of the sample analyzed), whether in status offenses only or in status offenses and delinquent behavior, shows that up to 70% of them engaged in some delinquent behavior during junior high school. And those youngsters who are more frequently involved in status offenses during senior high school were more frequently involved in delinquency during junior high school. Apparently, involvement in status offenses does not necessarily or even typically precede delinquency in the manner suggested by escalation theory. The evidence does not support the proposition that today's status offender becomes tomorrow's delinquent; to the contrary, one could suggest that today's status offender was likely yesterday's delinquent.

3. Among youngsters who engage in status offenses, will they engage in delinquent behavior? Does involvement in status offenses "predict" involvement in delinquent behavior?

Yes and no. Young status offenders tend to diversify their illegal involvement as they become older, rather than to specialize in status offenses. Among the small group of youngsters who are involved in status offenses only during junior high school, they maintain a low rate of illegal activity which by senior high school is as likely to include status offenses only as delinquent and status offenses.

It seems that one cannot predict accurately the pattern of illegal involvement of young status offenders because they are relatively unique, but more important, they are as likely to become versatile and add delinquency to their behavioral repertoire as to specialize and commit status offenses only. There is no predictable pattern of career development or escalation. Again, these findings do not support the notion that early involvement in status offenses leads to later involvement in delinquency--for some youngsters it does and for others it does not.

The implication here for the issue of jurisdiction over status offenses is that for the very small group of young offenders who commit status offenses only, intervention by the juvenile justice system is unnecessary for those who continue to specialize and probably unnecessary for those who become more versatile because they will very likely engage in less serious delinquency. The point is that if a juvenile is among those who begin their offender careers engaging in status offenses only (or in petty illegal behavior), it is likely that they will remain petty offenders who, perhaps, should not receive the punitive sanctions of the juvenile justice system. The great majority of young offenders begin their careers with delinquent and status offenses, and some begin with more serious illegal involvement than others. These latter types of juvenile offenders are the most likely candidates for juvenile justice system processing.

The last question has to do with the official reaction to status offenses and delinquent behavior.

4. Are the reactions of the police and juvenile court different for delinquent and status offenses? Which kind of behavior is most likely to lead to official attention and intervention?

In general, there is a weak relation between involvement in both status offenses and delinquent behavior and official delinquency, whether the measure of official delinquency is a self-report of police contact or arrest or an actual police or court record. This is not surprising given the very small proportion of illegal acts which leads to attention or intervention by authorities. More remarkable is the finding that the greatest risk of juvenile justice system processing exists among versatile offenders--those involved in both delinquent and status offenses--followed in turn by youngsters who more typically engage in status offenses and in delinquency. That is, the variety and amount, rather than the specific type, of illegal behavior is most important in eliciting an official response. The evidence is somewhat contradictory regarding the differential official reaction to youngsters who tend to specialize in status offenses or in delinquency, but it seems that the former are at least as likely (perhaps more likely) as the latter to have a police contact or official record. Apparently, involvement in status offenses increases the probability of official attention and intervention for those youngsters who are also committing delinquent acts.

In short, the juvenile justice system typically processes relatively serious offenders--versatile offenders who engage frequently in a variety of delinquent and status offenses. But it may select for intervention almost equally those few youngsters who might be characterized as status offense specialists. And it is least likely to respond and intervene when a youngster is among the few offenders who might be characterized as delinquency specialists.

It is not as clear what the implications of these findings are for the issue of jurisdiction over status offenses, primarily because analyses of official reactions to illegal behavior cannot generate direct implications regarding offender behavior per se. However, for that small proportion of illegal behavior which comes to the attention of authorities, the juvenile justice system seems to be responding appropriately to versatile offenders but perhaps inappropriately to the small groups of youngsters who more typically engage in delinquent or status offenses. For whatever reasons, the former are most successful at eluding control, while the latter may, in some cases, be as likely as more versatile offenders to come to the attention of the juvenile justice system. In terms of behavior only, one could infer that more juvenile crime could be handled by the system if it were not for status offenses receiving more attention. But it is clear that the juvenile justice system does not respond only to behavior or the extant offense--and it never has. And the higher rate of official intervention among self-reported status offenders than delinquents is evidence of the application of other criteria (for example, imputed need) to justify intervention.

In conclusion, the results of this study support the position that jurisdiction over status offenses should be restricted or, perhaps, even abandoned--but not over status offenses only but also over less serious delinquent behaviors. There are a number of empirically substantiated reasons for this conclusion: 1) There are two major categories of juvenile illegal behavior--petty illegal behavior, which includes status offenses and less serious delinquency, and serious delinquency--which do not correspond to the legal attributions of status offender or delinquent, but reflect the seriousness of involvement; 2) there is typically concurrent involvement in delinquent and status offenses; 3) youngsters who engage in status offenses usually have past involvement in delinquent behavior; 4) there is no predictable pattern of career development or escalation from involvement in status offenses to more serious delinquency; and 5) there is differential official reaction to status offenses and delinquent behavior which is not systematically based on the presenting behavior. In short, there is no important "difference" in involvement in delinquent or status offenses because involvement in juvenile illegal behavior cannot be differentiated meaningfully in terms of the usual legal distinctions, and there is no "escalation" from status offenses to more serious delinquency.

The important empirical difference in juvenile illegal behavior is between involvement in petty illegal behavior, which includes status offenses and less serious delinquency, and in serious delinquency--it is this difference to which the juvenile justice system should be responsive. The implications for the issue of jurisdiction over status offenses are that it should be restricted or abandoned, but for both status offenses and less serious delinquency. This can be accomplished legislatively through the jurisdictional abandonment of status offenses and operationally through administrative procedures which provide for the differential processing of petty and serious juvenile criminals.

NOTES

1. Of course, mislabeling, at least theoretically, should also have unanticipated positive consequences for the juvenile criminal who is processed as a status offender. One could predict a shortcircuiting or, in some cases, a de-escalation of delinquent career development. Or that association may lead to the de-contamination of delinquents.

2. And Meade (1973) reports, analyzing juvenile court data, that first time "status offenders are more likely to be recidivists than are the more serious first offenders."

3. These findings have been replicated in South Carolina where it is reported (Juvenile Justice Digest, 1979:7) that "juvenile offenders with a history of status offenses overwhelmingly remained status offenders and those with criminal offenses tended strongly to remain criminal offenders." That is, the evidence "refutes the so-called escalation theory currently promulgated by many juvenile justice practitioners."

4. See Appendix A for a description of each of the six data sets.

5. The issue of labeling effects will not be examined here, because the data do not allow it and the evidence shows that there is probably no escalation effect on status offenders (or delinquents) anyway (cf. Thomas, 1976; Clarke, 1975; and more generally, Gove, 1977).

6. See Appendix B for a description of the scale scoring procedures.

7. Pearson's correlations are employed in the analysis of these two data sets because of their ease in interpretation and their efficiency in utilizing all available data. They are appropriate for use with the interval level measures of delinquent behavior in these two data sets, and they use the information more efficiently than other measures of association. The coefficients range from -1.0 to 1.0.

8. See Appendix C for these data.

9. A partial correlation is the correlation between two variables when the effect(s) of another variable(s) is controlled by removal through a statistical calculation.

10. Multiple regression is a statistical technique for examining the simultaneous effects of several independent variables on a dependent variable. The summary statistic which results--R^2--may be interpreted as the proportion of the variation in the dependent variable which is explained by its association with the independent variables.

11. Although the analysis will focus on the same two data sets, the size of the Lafayette sample is smaller (N=351) since information on GPA was collected for only the twelfth graders.

12. Although six status offenses are included in the Lafayette self-report questionnaire, the two activities comprising the bulk of the status offenses brought to official attention--runaway and incorrigibility (Children in Custody, 1977)--are not among these items. However, "staying out all night" without parental permission is a surrogate measure of "runaway."

13. Item-by-item analysis was also undertaken using the two other delinquency scales, Serious Delinquency and Less Serious Delinquency. In general, observations based on the Delinquency scale are also applicable to the other two delinquency subscales.

14. Correlations measure the degree of association between two variables without considering causality. The direction of a relationship--changes in which variable cause changes in a second variable--must be argued theoretically.

15. In constructing the scale in this fashion, it was possible for a person who frequently participated in one type of act to receive a higher score than someone who participated in many types of acts less frequently. The writers are aware of the dangers of relying exclusively on summary measures, and because of this, a distinction between "serious" and "less serious" delinquent offenses, as well as an item-by-item analysis of various status offenses, have been included in this report.

16. The status offense vs. delinquent offense issue is a legalistic one. Those who are not directly interested in this particular debate might not have divided the offenses and scaled them as they are. Many different types of offenses can be included under both delinquent and status offense categories, and involvement patterns differ greatly depending on the specific offense. The seriousness of different delinquent offenses has been brought into the analysis where possible, but the small number of self-report items in the San Diego data set dictated the construction of one delinquency scale.

17. Status offenses in the Tri-Cities study were cutting school, running away, defying parents, and buying or drinking alcohol. Delinquent offenses were fist fighting, theft of items valued at less than $2, theft of items valued from $2-$50, theft over $50, gang fighting, auto theft, beating up other juveniles, and vandalism. The nominal response categories of self-reported involvement were recoded and assigned values so that "Never" = 0, "Once or Twice" = 1, "Several Times" = 2, and "Very Often" = 3. The item scores were then summed for each subject and collapsed into four ordinal categories: for the Status Offense Scale a total of zero = 0, one or two = 1, three or four = 2, and five or more = 3; for the Delinquent Behavior scale the collapsing procedure was the same except that three to five = 2, and six or more =3.

    Status offenses in the National study were drinking alcohol, hitting a parent, cutting school, and running away. Delinquent offenses were gang fighting, carrying a weapon, taking drugs, vandalism, auto theft, stealing (value unspecified), injuring a person, and illegal entry. Actual frequencies were reported for each offense, so these were collapsed to create additive scales with the same range as those in the Tri-Cities sample. Thus, zero = 0, one to two = 1, three to five = 2, and six or more = 3. The scales were then collapsed into four categories in the same manner as in the Tri-Cities data.

    Status offenses in the San Diego study were buying or drinking alcohol, cutting school, defying parents, and running away. Delinquent offenses were low, medium, and high theft; auto theft; theft by force; vandalism; and gang fighting. The nominal response categories were scaled and scored in the same manner as the Tri-Cities data.

18. It should be kept in mind that these are _typifications_ created for analytic purposes. As typifications they do not represent "pure" types, especially of delinquents and status offenders. The categories are not exclusive: Conformists are not absolute conformers but simply have low scores on both scales, and likewise, each of the offender categories includes a variety of scores on the Delinquency and Status Offenses scales. And, of course, the actual sizes of the groups do not correspond to the sizes of the categories in the figure.

APPENDIX A

DATA SETS USED IN SECONDARY ANALYSIS

The data sets analyzed in this report came from six research projects which differ as to time and place conducted and research methodology. The common features of all these projects are that each entailed direct contact with the adolescent subjects, at least some of whom were not officially-recognized delinquents, and each included the subjects' own reports of their involvement in delinquent behavior--both status offenses and criminal acts. In addition, all but one (the Lafayette study) include data on official intervention experienced by the subjects in connection with delinquent acts. Unfortunately, no data were available which would allow official status offenders to be distinguished from official delinquents.

TRI-CITIES: SHORT AND NYE

Research Setting

The research was conducted in 1955 in Richland, Pasco, and Kennewick, Washington, three contiguous cities with populations which ranged from 10,000 to 40,000. Each city forms a distinct demographic unit with its own business and residential districts, while the surrounding area consists of agricultural land, desert, and a large federal reservation. The population is reported to have been "overwhelmingly nativeborn Caucasian," and the population growth rates, geographic mobility, and average incomes were higher than the national average.

Sample

The sample consisted of all ninth through twelfth grade public high school students who were present on the day that the anonymous, self-administered questionnaires were administered (N=2,350). A follow-up on absentees was not conducted, nor is the number of lost respondents reported. The sample was divided by equal intervals into 25% subsamples and one of four questionnaires, each with some different and some shared items, was administered to each subsample. The 23 delinquency items were included on only three of the questionnaires; therefore, self-reported delinquency data were collected from approximately 1,670 subjects.

The subjects are white, divided almost equally between boys and girls, and range in age from thirteen to nineteen years old. The class distribution, based on respondents' reports of father's occupation, is fairly typical: 13.6% in the highest stratum, 33.5% and 39.6% in the two intermediate strata, and 13.3% in the lowest stratum (boys only). One hundred subjects could not be classified on SES because the household lacked an adult male, and another 28% (658) of the respondents could not be categorized because of ambiguous responses to the father's occupation item. However, father's education in this group of nonrespondents was distributed similarly to that among subjects for whom father's occupation data were usable.

Instrument

Anonymous, self-administered questionnaires were usually administered simultaneously in all school classes in a school by the researchers and staff, except for the smallest classes where the teacher was responsible for the administration. The students were not given advance notice of the questionnaire administration, and upon completion of the questionnaire the students placed them in sealed "ballot boxes" to reinforce the anonymity of their responses.

Subjects were asked to report how often they had ever engaged in each of twenty-three illegal behaviors by checking nominal response categories. For example:[1]

> Recent research has found that everyone breaks some rules and regulations during his lifetime. Some break them regularly, others less often. Below are some frequently broken. Check those that you have broken since beginning grade school.
>
> 1. Driven a car without a driver's license or permit? (Do not include driver training courses)
> (1) very often____, (2) several times ____,
> (3) once or twice____, (4) no____.

The number of response categories, as well as the frequency ranges within categories, vary by item. Reliability checks were incorporated among the items, including interlocking questions and petty misbehaviors which were assumed to be committed universally by youngsters. One percent of the questionnaires were eliminated from analysis for inconsistency or gross over- or under-reporting.

PROVO: ERICKSON AND EMPEY

The Provo Experiment (Empey and Rabow, 1961) is one of the classic projects in the rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents. It began in 1959 as an experimental, nonresidential treatment alternative to regular probation and institutionalization. A research component was incorporated into the design in order to evaluate project effectiveness, as well as to engage in more basic research on delinquent behavior.

Research Setting

The experiment was conducted in Provo, Utah, which is the major city in Utah County, a small urban area with a population of 110,000 at the time. Distinctive demographic characteristics of the area include a very low proportion of nonwhites and a very high proportion of members of the Mormon faith, which emphasizes the values of family participation, moral behavior, abstinence from alcohol, tobacco, and other stimulants, and anti-delinquent norms.

Sample

Three subsamples were drawn from a general population of high school students, probationers, and incarcerated delinquents. All subjects were male, 15-17 years old, with a minimum I.Q. of 80. Stratified random samples were drawn: 100[2] boys with no juvenile court record from a high school population in Utah County; 170 boys with records of persistent delinquency who were placed on probation by the county juvnile court; and 85 boys incarcerated in state institutions for juvenile delinquents. Those subjects destined for either probation or incarceration were randomly allocated to a treatment group (Pinehills nonresidential treatment center). or a control group (probation or incarceration).

Because of the purposive sampling method and the fact that the three subsample proportions do not represent the distribution of these categories in the youth population, interpretations of data must be made cautiously, especially when based on pooled subsamples.

Instrument

Self-reported delinquency data were collected in what can be characterized as "deep probe" interviews by the researchers and graduate assistants. The interviews, which took a couple of hours to complete, were conducted in a number of different settings: the high school boys and control group probationers were interviewed primarily in the research office, which was adjacent to the experiment site, or, when necessary, in the interviewer's car; treatment group probationer's were interviewed in the research office; and incarcerated delinquents were interviewed in the institution. Each of 22 offenses was described in detail and the respondents were asked how many times they had ever committed, been caught, been arrested or been referred to juvenile court for each offense. Additionally, information regarding the group nature of involvement in each offense was gathered: whether the act was committed with an associate, the percentage of incidents committed with others, and number of associates typically involved in the commission of the offense. The interview schedule also included a number of items which tapped demographic characteristics of the subjects, family composition, parents' occupations, attachment to parents, involvement in religion, school performance, educational/occupational aspirations and expectations, peer attachment, and so on.

SAN DIEGO: ELLIOTT AND VOSS

Delinquency and Dropout (Elliott and Voss, 1974) reports on the largest and most comprehensive longitudinal cohort study of self-reported delinquent behavior to date. The relationship between school experience--particularly dropping out--and delinquency was examined by following a cohort of ninth-graders through their high school career. The findings lend some support to the differential opportunity theory of juvenile delinquency.

Research Setting

The research was conducted between 1963 and 1967 in two metropolitan areas in California. The primary research site was a unified school district which served three contiguous suburban communities and other parts of the county around

San Diego. Seven of the eight public schools from which subjects were drawn are located in this southern California area, while the other school is located in Redwood City, a suburban community south of San Francisco. This school was included in the sample because of the small percentage of blacks in the San Diego sample.

The communities in the San Diego area are heterogeneous along a number of dimensions. The percentage of males in white-collar occupations for each of the three largest communities is 45.6, 33.5, and 28.2; the percent Chicano is 6.8, 12.7, and 27.0; the median years of school completed is 12.2, 10.9, and 9.9; and 4.5, 12.6, and 20.0 percent of the housing is deteriorating or dilapidated. In Redwood City, only three percent of the dwellings are deteriorated, but eighteen percent of all housing units are overcrowded, which reflects the rapid growth of a previously underdeveloped suburban area. The median income of the residents is approximately twenty percent lower than that of the encompassing county. And there is a higher proportion of juvenile delindents in the community (50%) than in the county (35%). Although it is located in a suburban area, the community has many of the characteristics and problems of an urban core community, varying perhaps only in intensity.

Sample

A purposive cluster sample of all students entering seven junior high schools and one high school as ninth graders in September 1963 comprised the target study population of 2,721. Data were collected upon entrance into the ninth grade and annually, thereafter, until the usual date of graduation from high school in 1967. A total of 2,658 questionnaires were completed during the first wave--fifty-eight students were absentees and five refused to participate in the study. The mother or mother surrogate of 2,617 of these respondents completed interviews and granted permisssion to include their children in subsequent stages of the study. Over the next three waves of data collection, 235 subjects (9%) were lost, primarily due to changes in residence or refusals to continue participation. These lost subjects were similar to the study cohort with respect to race and class, but they were predominantly male (65%) and had reported significantly higher involvement in delinquency.

The final study sample of 2,617 is divided almost equally between boys (50.5%) and girls (49.5%) and is relatively heterogeneous in ethnic composition: 74.9% white, 13.6% Chicano, 6.8% black, and 4.7% other. The modal age for the ninth-grade cohort is fourteen years old (70%), but some subjects are thirteen (11%), fifteen (17%), or sixteen or older (1%).[3]

Instrument

A questionnaire was administered in groups in the schools during each of the four years of the study.[4] Most of the groups consisted of twenty to thirty students, although larger groups were constituted in the last year because of administrative problems.

A number of efforts were made to create as nonthreatening a research situation as possible. Every group of subjects was given oral instructions by the researchers and questions were clarified as they arose. No school personnel were present during the administration of the questionnaires. Confidentiality of the responses was guaranteed, although the longitudinal nature of the research precluded anonymity of respondents. The subject's name did not appear on the questionnaire; rather, a precoded identification number was placed on the questionnaire and the respondents were told that the name-ID codes would be retained only until all the data were collected when they would be destroyed. The primary foci of the questionnaire, which took from forty to sixty minutes to complete, were educational and occupational aspirations, expectations, and opportunities. The self-reported delinquency items were included in the questionnaire on only the first and fourth waves (ninth and twelfth grades). Instructions and response categories for the delinquency items implied that some, but not all, respondents might have engaged in some of the activities. Respondents were asked to select from a set of nominal response categories (for example, "1) None; 2) Once or twice; 3) Several times; 4) Very often") the number of times they had committed each of the twelve[5] delinquent acts within the past three years. The number of associates in these delinquent activities was also elicited. To reduce the possibility of response set, the order of the response categories was altered occasionally. Approximately two percent of the subjects were identified as unreliable respondents because they consistently checked the first or last response category.

Data were also collected from a number of official records. Achievement test scores, grades, IQ scores, and information on absenteeism and disciplinary action for each subject were obtained from school records. The records of police, sheriffs, and probation departments and juvenile courts were examined for evidence of official contact with the criminal justice system.[6]

In addition to being analyzed independently, the police and court records were used to assess the validity of the self-report data. Twenty-two percent of the respondents who had committed offenses "known to the police" failed to report these same offenses in the first wave and seventeen percent in the fourth wave. And serious violations were more frequently underreported than less serious criminal acts. However, a high degree of concordance was attained when using a less rigorous validation criterion--the percentage of subjects who failed to report any delinquent act equally or more serious than their officially recorded offense(s).

NATIONAL: GOLD

The first of two National Surveys of Youth, both conducted by the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan, was completed in 1967. This study of the behavior and attitudes of a representative population of American teenagers is unique among studies of self-reported delinquent behavior, as well as of youthful conduct in general.

Research Setting and Sample

The sample was drawn from a clustered probability sampling frame of dwelling units in the forty-eight contiguous United States. 1,367 households which contained individuals who would be thirteen through sixteen years old in 1967 were contacted to arrange participation in the study. 959 (70%) of these units included eligible respondents and eighty-five percent of these agreed to participate. To maintain the representativeness of the sample, thirty-seven black subjects were added by random supplementary sampling to constitute the final sample of 847.

Sampling validity was tested because of the initial thirty percent sampling loss. Reasons for attrition, such as residential mobility, were not correlated with other variables in the study, and comparisons with youth population data and known characteristics of the sampling frame indicated that the sample was "adequately representative of the population."[7] Therefore, as one would expect, the sample is representative of the sex, race, and SES distributions of 13-16 year-olds in the United States.

Instrument

Interviews were conducted in the field, preferably in locations outside of the respondents' homes, by trained graduate student interviewers. To maximize the cooperation of respondents, interviewers were matched by sex with subjects and the confidentiality of responses was assured before the interview began and was repeated before the administration of the delinquency items. The interview schedule contained an exhaustive list of independent variables, including items which measured family composition, residential history, nationality, parents' education and occupation, school grades, educational and occupational aspirations and expectations, religious beliefs, peer association and influence, social activities, club and group memberships, leisure activities, law violation, and so on.

A card-sort technique was used to administer the sixteen delinquency items to the subjects. Each respondent was handed a set of sixteen IBM cards, one card per deliquency item, and was asked to sort them into three piles which corresponded to the number of times--never, once, or more than once--the subject had committed the act within the past three years. The respondent was then questioned in detail about the most recent incidents, up to a maximum of three, within each reported offense category. The details of these offense incidents included: number of times committed; reasons for doing act; associates; plan and time; instigator; consequences of act; contact with school, police, or other authorities and their actions; interviewer's rating of seriousness of the event; and so on. Subjects who had contacts with the police were also asked about their perception of how the police handled the incident and of the effect of this interaction with the criminal justice system or others' feelings toward them.

Official delinquency data were gathered from police and juvenile court records two years after the completion of the interviews. Since the self-reports revealed that delinquent acts are usually committed within a five mile radius from home, the record search was restricted to the subjects' counties of residence and contiguous counties.

LAFAYETTE: WEIS

Research Setting

The research was conducted in Lafayette, California, a predominantly white (99.1%) upper-middle class suburban community in the San Francisco Bay area. The 1970 population of 20,484 was more advantaged in a number of ways than their county and statewide neighbors. They had completed more years of school, held better jobs, and had higher incomes. An unusually high 88.8% of the adult labor force was employed in professional, managerial, or executive positions.[8] Seventy-five percent of the heads of households were homeowners, and the community can be characterized as politically conservative. The school system is one of the best in the state, as evidenced by students' high scores on statewide achievement tests, intelligence tests, and other academic performance criteria.

Sample

The two schools most representative of the population of Lafayette and its adolescents were selected as the primary research sites. The entire eighth grade in one of two intermediate schools[9] and the entire eleventh grade in the only senior high school were selected for study, primarily because they are considered to represent the formative and consummative stages, respectively, in the development of the adolescent society and secondarily because they represent the midpoints, respectively, of the junior and senior high school experiences. The base sample of 658 subjects consists of all students who were enrolled when the research began; the final study population of 555 includes only those subjects with complete data for the various collection techniques employed in the entire study. All of the subjects are white, slightly less than half of them are eighth graders, and surprisingly, more than fifty-four percent of the subjects are boys. Except for the eleven percent who are from blue collar families, the respondents are typically "middle class."

Instrument

Over the course of two school years, the researchers spent a great deal of time in both of the schools utilizing a diversity of research techniques--interviews, questionnaires, observations, collection of secondary data--to understand better the adolescent social structural and cultural context of delinquent behavior. A variety of data collection methods was employed but only data from anonymous self-report questionnaires of delinquent behavior were included in the current analysis. This questionnaire was administered in classrooms, during one school day, by the researchers. The respondents were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and remained anonymous--they put their responses on an answer sheet which did not include the questions and they did not sign their names to it. The subjects were asked to report the number of times they had engaged in each of thirty-four delinquent acts within the past three years.

SOMERVILLE: HINDELANG

Research Setting

The research was conducted in 1971 in Somerville, Massachusetts, a community in the Boston metropolitan area which is adjacent to Harvard University.

Sample

The sample consisted of 1119 high school students, forty-five percent of whom were in the tenth grade, twenty-nine percent in the eleventh grade, and twenty-five percent in the twelfth grade. Almost ninety percent of the subjects were fifteen to seventeen years old. The sample was divided almost equally by sex and was ninety-eight percent white. The subjects typically came from working class families--sixty-eight percent of the subjects' fathers were unskilled, semi-skilled, or skilled blue-collar workers.

Instrument

An anonymous, self-administered questionnaire was the data collection instrument. Subjects were administered the questionnaire by the researcher and assistants in groups of about 200 students in the school auditorium. No teachers or school personnel were present when the subjects filled out the survey. The students were asked to participate and cooperate in a study of youth in the area by answering questions about the attitudes, beliefs, and behavior of adolescents. They were not asked to affix their names to the questionnaire and were assured of the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses.

The questionnaire contained a number of items designed to measure a variety of independent variables. A number of these items tap variables important in control theory, while others are relevant for other theories of juvenile delinquency.

The dependent variable was measured with nineteen self-reported delinquency items. Subjects were asked to report the number of times in the past year they had engaged in each of the delinquent acts. For each act they were also asked whether: they had the assistance of a partner; the act was planned; they approved of the act; their best friend approved of the behavior.

In addition, they were asked how many times they had ever been contacted by the police for each offense; how many times they had been arrested in the past year for each of the acts; how many times they had ever been arrested for each act. The respondents were also asked to guess the likelihood of being caught by the police for a variety of offenses, as well as to report the number of times they had in fact been picked up by the police.

APPENDIX A

NOTES

1. From Student Research Questionnaire B, Section E. Rules and Regulations, p. 12.

2. The Ns reported in published articles are not consistent; the Ns reported here are similar to published Ns and are those contained in the data set which we have analyzed.

3. The reported percentages were computed from a 25 percent random sample of subjects.

4. Interviews were conducted with those subjects who became "dropouts" during the study; they were asked essentially the same questions as the student subjects, except that some items pertaining to school experience were replaced with items relating to out-of-school activities and aspirations.

5. A thirteenth item, drug use, was added in the fourth wave.

6. Only contacts for "crimes" as defined by the California Penal Code, including status offenses but excluding traffic violations, are counted as "official contact."

7. The author does not report on the characteristics of the households which refused interviews.

8. Based on the Turner Scale (Turner, 1964) classification of the occupations of subjects' fathers.

9. The intermediate school chosen for study graduated its students into the study high school, while the other intermediate school fed high schools outside of Lafayette.

APPENDIX B

THE CONSTRUCTION OF DELINQUENCY AND STATUS OFFENSE SCALES SOMERVILLE AND LAFAYETTE DATA SETS

The scoring criteria for a particular scale were the same across the two data sets. All scale scores were weighted sums across the relevant items. The derivation of scale scores involved two mathematical operations: Each item frequency was multiplied by a unique seriousness weight and then these amounts were summed. The numerical weights, obtained through the judgment of a panel of experts were as follows: (a) low thefts = 3; (b) medium theft = 8; (c) high theft = 12; (d) low property damage = 3; (e) high property damage = 8; (f) fist fight = 6; (g) car theft = 10; (h) break and enter = 13; (i) weapon fight = 15; (j) robbery = 14; and (k) smoking marijuana = 2.

Criteria were also established for the treatment of missing cases. The general rule followed was that respondents who failed to respond to at least 80% of the items making up a particular scale were declared missing cases for that scale. For example, subjects who failed to respond to two or more items on the 11-item full frequency and seriousness scale were eliminated from the analysis.

Those respondents, then, who had fewer than 20% missing values on the delinquency items of any scale were retained in the analysis. Of course, it was necessary to develop some criterion for assigning scores to those items, if any, on which a particular subject failed to respond. The decision was made to substitute the sample mean on any particular item having a missing score. A second type of correction factor, conceptually analogous to that employed, was also considered, where the subject mean score (for a single item) was substituted for the missing value. Changing the scoring procedure, however, had little or no impact on the relationships between the independent variables and the delinquency scale scores.

The procedures described above were also used in computing the full frequency status offense scale for the Lafayette data set. As for the status offense prevalence scales, each respondent was given a score of 1 on each scale item for which one or more involvements were reported and a 0 if no involvement was reported. These scores were then summed across the relevant items.

APPENDIX C

TABLE C1

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN DELINQUENT AND STATUS OFFENSE SCALES

	SOMERVILLE DATA SET (N=1119)		LAFAYETTE DATA SET (N=668)	
Zero-Order Correlations:				
	Status Offenses I	Status Offenses II	Status Offenses I	Status Offenses III
Delinquency	.21*	.22*	.34*	.41*
Serious Delinquency	.12*	.12*	.18*	.22*
Less Serious Delinquency	.33*	.38*	.44*	.53*
Partial Correlations:				
		Controlling for Sex		
Delinquency	.19*	.23*	.33*	.41*
Serious Delinquency	.10*	.12*	.17*	.22*
Less Serious Delinquency	.32*	.38*	.43*	.53*
		Controlling for Delinquent Peers		
Delinquency	.11*	.11*	.27*	.34*
Serious Delinquency	.05	.04	.13**	.17***
Less Serious Delinquency	.21*	.25*	.36*	.45*
		Controlling for GPA		
Delinquency	.20*	.20*	.28*	.31*
Serious Delinquency	.11*	.09*	.13***	.14***
Less Serious Delinquency	.32*	.36*	.39*	.45*

	SOMERVILLE DATA SET (n=1119)		LAFAYETTE DATA SET (N=668)	
	Status Offenses I	Status Offenses II	Status Offenses I	Status Offenses III
	Controlling for Sex and Delinquent Peers			
Delinquency	.10*	.13*	.26*	.35*
Serious Delinquency	.04	.05	.12**	.17***
Less Serious Delinquency	.21*	.27*	.35*	.46*
	Controlling for Sex, Delinquent Peers and GPA			
Delinquency	.09*	.12*	.24*	.28*
Serious Delinquency	.03	.04	.10**	.12**
Less Serious Delinquency	.20*	.26*	.33*	.42*

* = Significant at .001.
** = Significant at .01.
*** = Significant at .05.

TABLE C2

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN DELINQUENT AND STATUS OFFENSE SCALES WITH SELECTED INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

SOMERVILLE DATA SET (N=1119)

Zero-Order Correlations:

	Sex[1]	Age	SES	GPA	Delinquent Peers
Delinquency	.20*	.04	-.01	-.11*	.27*
Serious Delinquency	.18*	.03	-.01	-.10*	.19*
Less Serious Delinquency	.19*	.04	.01	-.11*	.38*
Status Offenses I	.10*	.10*	.05	-.10*	.41*
Status Offenses II	-.02	.07**	.02	-.19*	.43*

Partial Correlations:

		Controlling for Sex			
Delinquency	--	.00	-.07	-.12*	.27*
Serious Delinquency	--	-.02	-.02	-.10*	.17*
Less Serious Delinquency	--	.04	.01	-.11*	.36*
Status Offenses I	--	.11*	.04	-.11*	.40*
Status Offenses II	--	.09**	.02	-.21*	.44*

Partial Correlations:

	Sex[1]	Age	SES	GPA	Delinquent Peers
		Controlling for Peers			
Delinquency	.17*	.02	-.01	-.10*	--
Serious Delinquency	.16*	-.00	-.01	-.09**	--
Less Serious Delinquency	.19*	.05	.01	-.08**	--
Status Offenses I	.05**	.12*	.05	-.09**	--
Status Offenses II	-.09**	.10**	.02	-.19*	--
		Controlling for GPA			
Delinquency	.20*	.01	.01	--	.28*
Serious Delinquency	.18*	-.01	-.00	--	.18*
Less Serious Delinquency	.19*	.05	.02	--	.37*
Status Offenses I	.11*	.11*	.05	--	.41*
Status Offenses II	.00	.08**	.03	--	.43*

* = Significant at .001.
** = Significant at .05.

1. Boys = 1; Girls = 0.

TABLE C3

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN DELINQUENCY AND STATUS OFFENSE SCALES WITH SELECTED INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

LAFAYETTE DATA SET (N=668)

	Sex[1]	Age [2]	SES	GPA[3]	Delinquent Peers
Zero-Order Correlations:					
Delinquency	.19*	-.05	-.05	-.36*	.30*
Serious Delinquency	.14*	.03	-.04	-.23*	.18*
Less Serious Delinquency	.19*	.16*	-.03	-.35*	.38*
Status Offenses I	.11*	.45*	-.03	-.24*	.35*
Status Offenses III	.04	.54*	-.00	-.43*	.36*
Partial Correlations:					
		Controlling for Sex			
Delinquency	--	-.06	-.05	-.34*	.27*
Serious Delinquency	--	.02	-.04	-.21*	.16*
Less Serious Delinquency	--	.17**	-.03	-.33*	.35*
Status Offenses I	--	.46*	-.03	-.23*	.33*
Status Offenses III	--	.54*	-.00	-.43*	.36*

	Sex[1]	Age[2]	SES	GPA[3]	Delinquent Peers
		Controlling for Peers			
Delinquency	.13**	-.03	-.06	-.28*	--
Serious Delinquency	.11**	.04	-.05	-.18*	--
Less Serious Delinquency	.13**	.14**	-.06	-.25*	--
Status Offenses I	.04	.45*	-.05	-.14**	--
Status Offenses III	.03	.54*	-.02	-.34*	--
		Controlling for GPA			
Delinquency	.14**	--	-.01	--	.19*
Serious Delinquency	.11**	--	-.02	--	.11**
Less Serious Delinquency	.15**	--	.06	--	.29*
Status Offenses I	.08	--	-.01	--	.29*
Status Offenses III	-.02	--	.05	--	.25*

* = Significant at .001

** = Significant at .05

1. Boys = 1; Girls = 0.
2. Age = School Grade, 11th or 8th.
3. GPA only for 12th Grade.

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